Baker Institute for Animal Health
Annual Report 2008
To Improve Animal Health Through Basic and Applied Research
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Dear Friends,

This report marks the end of my third and final five-year term as Baker Institute Director. This tenure has given me the chance to give back to an institution that nurtured me during the early days of my career as a veterinary scientist. It has been a great privilege to serve the Institute, its faculty, staff, and students.

There have been many positive developments over the past fifteen years. We have strengthened the Institute’s infrastructure with new construction and renovation of older facilities, and through the acquisition of sophisticated scientific instruments and equipment. This environment has attracted outstanding new faculty members and top-flight students at all levels of training, from talented Cornell undergraduates hoping for a career in veterinary medicine, to advanced post-doctoral scientists ready to make their marks in research. During this period the Institute has continued to make practical advances in animal health and, through its fundamental research programs, to lay the foundation for future breakthroughs in preventive medicine, diagnostics, and treatment of uncontrolled diseases.

The Baker Institute is now on the cusp of the sixtieth anniversary of the its founding in 1950. It is a time for celebration, but also for reflection and planning. During the past fifty years the Institute has developed what has been called a “tradition of innovation.” The Institute has shown the capacity to evolve, and to meet changing needs in animal health, while maintaining the highest standards of scientific inquiry. Thus, the Institute’s initial focus on infectious disease has now been broadened to include genetics, reproduction, and cancer biology.

Driven by high technology, the Institute has been a site for significant innovations in biomedical research, but our direction has been set by a compass that points towards important problems in animal health. As we move into the next phase of the Institute’s development, I am confident that the Baker Institute will continue to be one of the world’s premier institutions for veterinary medical research.

For more than fifty years, donors to the Baker Institute have helped to keep the Institute on course. My time as Baker Institute Director provided me with the opportunity to get to know a great many wonderful people in the private sector who share a passion for animals and who understand how they enrich our lives. I will treasure those memories.

Thank you for your continued support.

D. F. Antczak, VMD, PhD
Director
Dr. Acland’s collaborations with researchers at Cornell and beyond are finding the causes for a variety of genetic diseases. His efforts have even helped to cure a form of blindness in dogs and people.

Already, Dr. Acland and his collaborators have identified the genes for fifteen different diseases and, for many of them, developed tests that breeders can use to tell which animals carry the gene. Because of this work, he says, “several of these diseases no longer exist in the world.”

The team uses state-of-the-art technology called association mapping. “We take DNA from a dog and apply it to a chip that’s built in much the same way as computer chips are built, except that it sorts DNA into tiny fragments that a computer can read,” explains Dr. Acland. “The computer can tell you where the DNA of affected dogs differs significantly from all the non-affected dogs.” That difference points to the gene at the root of the disease. From collecting samples to crunching numbers and analyzing results, partnerships across Cornell and the Baker Institute make this work possible.

Another strategy used to combat blindness: gene therapy, holds promise for people who were born with a genetic disease. Several years ago, Dr. Acland and his collaborators were able to cure a dog named Lancelot of congenital night blindness. Now, with Lancelot still alive and enjoying clear vision, the technique is being used in humans. About a dozen people worldwide have had their sight restored in the same way as Lancelot.

“We are repeating the gene therapy in a larger number of dogs to follow what happens in the long term,” says Dr. Acland, both to keep an eye out for possible side effects and to study how the brain learns to process visual information after a lifetime of blindness. Meanwhile, the team is extending gene therapy to other diseases that were once untreatable, including a type of day blindness that affects both dogs and humans.

“We have been choosing diseases that are relatively straightforward to start with, but we are now advancing to address more complicated disorders,” says Dr. Acland. Furthermore, Dr. Acland has expressed an interest in studying cancer genes, and the complex question of why animals behave the way they do.

A member of Dr. Acland’s lab, Anna Kukekova, began studying animal behavior through the mapping of the genetic pedigrees of tame foxes, looking for differences between these animals and their more aggressive cousins. “Fox behavior is clearly a complex trait,” says Dr. Acland. “We know there’s not a single gene that causes all the difference between tame and aggressive foxes.” Hip dysplasia and mast cell tumors are among the other complex traits that the lab is studying.
The horse genome project has come a long way since a mare from Dr. Doug Antczak’s herd at Cornell was chosen to be the project’s DNA donor. Twilight is a Thoroughbred who carries the genes of several generations of horses bred for studies of pregnancy immunology at the Baker Institute. Her complete genome sequence, decoded at MIT’s Broad Institute in 2006 with funds from the US National Institutes of Health, is now freely available in the public domain as a resource for scientists and equine clinicians. This advance in equine genomics provides a wealth of possibilities for improving the health of the horse.

The term “complete genome sequence” is a bit of a misnomer for two main reasons, says Dr. Antczak. First, some parts of the DNA genetic code are more difficult to determine than others. Therefore, even in a complete sequence it is estimated that about fifteen percent of the DNA code remains unknown. Second, because there is variation among horses, as there is for other animals, including humans, Twilight’s complete genome sequence does not reflect all of the DNA variation present in the diverse horse breeds found around the world. Nevertheless, Twilight’s 2.7 billion base pair sequence provides a critical standard for assessing genetic variation among horses.

The equine genome sequencing project discovered that there is less variation among breeds of horses than the huge differences other researchers have found among breeds of dogs. “The dog is probably the exception, and the horse is more like other species of mammal,” says Dr. Antczak. Another surprising finding is that domestic horses are very closely related to the Przewalski horse, a wild Russian horse that was long considered to be a separate species.

The completed genome project is only the beginning of applications in equine genetic investigation. One of the new tools now available to equine researchers is a Single Nucleotide Polymorphism, or SNP chip. Pronounced “snip chip,” this device contains thousands of DNA fragments from the horse genome. Each fragment includes a short DNA sequence that can vary among horses. The fragments are spaced more or less evenly throughout the equine genome. Testing a horse’s DNA with the SNP chip provides a sophisticated profile of the animal’s DNA variation that can be compared with the profiles of other horses. By comparing groups of horses, for example, that do or do not suffer from a suspected inherited condition, researchers can use the SNP chip to pinpoint the location in the genome that carries the mutation responsible for the disease. This approach may help to uncover the source of still mysterious genetic diseases.

One such disease is Lavender Foal Syndrome. The fatal condition affects Arabian foals, giving them neurological defects and a characteristic pale color. The disease is rare and poorly understood, but Dr. Antczak and his collaborators believe that with the SNP chip they will find the responsible gene. Identification of the Lavender Foal mutation would enable the development of a diagnostic test. Such tests can be used by horse breeders to select breeding pairs of stallions and mares that will produce foals free of this disease.
Although billions of people worldwide suffer from chronic infection with parasitic worms, not enough is understood about how the immune system fights this type of infection. In fact, Dr. Appleton's lab has learned, the immune system doesn't fully fight off the worms, but actually protects them from harm.

This fascinating balancing act between host and parasite has led to important insights about how our immune systems work. In a recent paper, Dr. Appleton and her colleagues show that eosinophils, immune system cells previously thought to attack parasitic worms, actually play a role in keeping the worms alive.

The worms are large—up to a millimeter long—and destroying them could be devastating to the host animal's muscle. “The immune response could get carried away, destroying the host's tissue,” Dr. Appleton explains. Instead, by protecting the worm, the host also protects itself.

“The parasite has evolved with the host and is extremely well-adapted. You can think of that as the parasite manipulating the host's immune system, or think of it as the host's immune system having evolved so that it controls itself,” she says.

The host's immune system has another way of protecting itself from the worms: as long as Trichinella is living in muscle cells, the host animal can eat infected meat without taking on additional parasites. Work in Dr. Appleton's lab also focuses on this form of immunity, which acts within the animal's intestines.

Dr. Appleton says that Trichinella is an especially important parasite to study, in part because of the diversity of hosts it infects. Rodents and pigs are commonly its carriers, but in other climates the parasite infects crocodiles and even polar bears.

Other work in the Appleton lab includes a project to study Parelaphostrongylus tenuis, which can infect camelid species such as llamas, and alpacas. Since camels' antibodies take an unusual form, this work may shed light on exactly how antibodies do their job.

Dr. Appleton's work on immune responses to parasites may one day help to develop a vaccine for parasitic worms, which infect billions of animals and people worldwide.

Her work may also help in understanding allergies. “Allergy in this country now is considered to be epidemic,” says Dr. Appleton. “The prevalence of allergy has increased dramatically in the last fifty years, and we need to devise ways to prevent it.” The Appleton lab is collaborating with scientists at the Mayo Clinic to study the immune responses that are common to both allergens and parasites.
By studying how the immune system and the liver interact, Dr. Bliss hopes to shed light on diseases that affect the liver, opening the door to future treatments for conditions like hepatitis and even cancer.

Blood flowing from the digestive system filters through the liver before it can reach the rest of the body. Since the blood coming from the gut contains both safe components, like food, and potentially dangerous ones, like parasites, the body needs to learn how to tell which is which.

The liver seems to play an important role in that process of distinguishing dangerous from harmless substances, but exactly how it does so is not yet well understood. Dr. Bliss is working on this problem, saying that “a better appreciation of how the liver functions in immunity is key to understanding diseases that affect the gastrointestinal tract as well as the liver.”

Dr. Bliss and her colleagues use two parasites, Trichinella spiralis and Toxoplasma gondii, to probe the immune relationship between the gut and liver. Both parasites establish infection by being eaten, entering the body through the intestinal tract. Both also gain access to the blood and pass through the liver before circulating through the rest of the body. However, each parasite induces a very different type of immune response.

“Using these two pathogens, we can stimulate the immune system and look at the resultant immune responses in the liver,” says Dr. Bliss. The team has begun to unravel some of the complex interactions that are involved.

Recent work has revealed that a signaling molecule, the regulatory cytokine known as interleukin-10 or IL-10, protects the liver from injury during infection. Specifically, IL-10 controls the behavior of activated white blood cells that migrate between the intestine and the liver. Currently, the Bliss laboratory is trying to understand this process at a molecular level.

Another project involves studying cells that have been influenced by IL-10 and can protect against liver injury. Dr. Bliss hopes to understand how these cells are created and how they act in the body, saying “if we can figure out how these cells protect the liver, we may be able to harness and expand their protective qualities to treat inflammatory diseases of the liver and gut.”
Dr. Coonrod is studying an enzyme family that promises to shed light on aspects of fertility, contraception, and cancer. One member, PADI6, plays an important role in allowing a newly-fertilized egg to develop, while others such as PADI4 may hold keys to understanding the progression of breast cancer in humans and animals.

When egg meets sperm, the egg needs to transition from being part of the mother's body to being a new individual. Dr. Coonrod's lab has found that PADI6 is one of a few identified maternal genes that help the new embryo manage the early stages of development.

“PADI6 seems to kickstart the embryo to make its own proteins, so it can fend for itself,” says Dr. Coonrod. Female mice who are missing the PADI6 gene are infertile; their eggs are healthy, but embryos cannot grow past the two-cell stage.

A special property of early embryos is that they are “totipotent”—able to become any type of cell that the body needs. How do mere sperm and egg DNA gain that ability? “We think a structure called the cytoplasmic lattice is involved in that reprogramming process,” says Dr. Coonrod. His lab discovered that PADI6 is necessary to create that lattice. The structure stores cellular components that the embryo needs for its development, and the Coonrod lab's next goal is to investigate the components of the lattice and what role that structure plays as the embryo develops.

Another branch of the PADI family tree includes enzymes that convert positively-charged amino acids to ones that do not have a charge. Electrical charges are critical in determining the shape of a protein.

Dr. Coonrod and his team found out that these PADI enzymes target histones: proteins that provide structural support for DNA. By changing the shape of the histones, the PADI enzymes help to regulate which genes are expressed or “turned on.”

The Coonrod lab is now looking at the role this process plays in breast cancer. Several members of the PADI family, particularly PADI4, seem to play important roles in both normal and cancerous breast tissue cells. The Coonrod lab is studying breast cancer in dogs, whose mammary tumors appear similar to humans' in many ways.

PADI enzymes may suppress tumors, and testing for them might allow a doctor to tell how far breast cancer has progressed in a patient. In a related line of research, Dr. Coonrod's team is investigating whether drugs that inactivate PADI enzymes also slow cancer progression and thus eventually may be used to treat breast cancer in both dogs and humans.
Hip dysplasia is a common but debilitating disease that can end working dogs' careers and disable active pets. Up to fifty percent of dogs in certain large breeds are affected. Dr. Lust is working on ways to understand and control this disease.

The standard test for hip dysplasia involves an X-ray of the dog's hips, but the test is only accurate for adult dogs, and can only diagnose hip dysplasia once damage has begun. Dr. Lust is working toward a genetic test that can be used early in a dog's life to tell whether the dog will develop the condition as it gets older.

“We want to find a way to diagnose it from a sample of blood or a cheek swab,” he explains. Hip dysplasia is likely caused by a combination of genes, and Dr. Lust and his collaborators are on the road to discovering some of the players.

One of those genes is fibrillin-2. That gene is on a region of DNA that the research team found to be associated with hip dysplasia.

Dr. Lust, with co-workers from the College of Veterinary Medicine's Department of Clinical Sciences, investigated the effects of fibrillin-2 mutations in the hip joint capsule, a structure made of connective tissue that surrounds and supports the joint. Fibrillin-2 is involved in the structure of connective tissue, and dogs with hip dysplasia had less of this important protein in their joint capsules.

The researchers are now focusing on the other genes that seem to be associated with hip dysplasia. Their goal is not just to develop tests for the disease, but also to fully understand how hip dysplasia develops, and how various genes and proteins contribute to the problem. This information could help to treat or prevent the disease.

A recent project by Dr. Lust and his colleagues focuses on another, immediate concern: how breeders can avoid passing the condition on to new generations of dogs. Since the genetics of the trait are complicated and not all dogs are tested, breeding disease-free dogs is not as simple as it sounds.

Dr. Lust and colleagues Dr. Rory Todhunter and Zhiwu Zhang recently performed an analysis using pedigrees to link the test results of thousands of related dogs. “This method integrates the health status of the dog itself, its siblings, its parents, and all of its relatives. A computer program then calculates a breeding value for that dog,” explains Dr. Lust. The higher the breeding value, the more likely that dog will not pass hip dysplasia genes on to its offspring.

Using this method, breeders could choose dogs for breeding stock who not only have healthy hips themselves, but whose family connections show that they are likely to have offspring with healthy hips.
Once considered a tropical disease, leishmaniasis is an emerging concern in the United States. With some forms of the disease being potentially fatal, and currently without an effective vaccine, the disease threatens dogs and humans in many parts of the world.

Rather than being transmitted directly from animal to animal, some diseases are transmitted by vectors. Often times, vectors are insects and, as part of a worldwide phenomenon, some disease vectors are expanding their ranges. The sandfly, which carries the leishmania parasite, is one of those. “Insects can now live in places where they couldn’t live twenty or fifty years ago,” says Dr. Mendez. Sandflies have been found as far north as Montana.

Dr. Mendez emphasizes that the human and canine aspects of the disease are related. “An important way to control the human disease is to control the disease in other infected species,” she says. Untreated dogs can act as a reservoir for the parasite, putting people at risk.

But a vaccine may be on the horizon. Work in Dr. Mendez’s lab, along with collaborators Helene Marquis at Cornell, and Jesus Valenzuela at the National Institutes of Health, takes advantage of the way the disease is transmitted: by a bite from a sandfly.

The new vaccine uses genetically modified bacteria to deliver proteins from sandfly saliva. The vaccinated animal’s immune system reacts to the saliva antigens as it attacks the bacteria. Later, if the animal is bitten by an infected sandfly, its immune reaction against the saliva will also eliminate the parasite.

“We still don’t know the exact mechanism, but we know that it works,” says Dr. Mendez. The team is trying to understand what makes the vaccine so effective, so that one day it might be available for dogs and humans.

Another promising line of research may result in a new treatment for leishmaniasis. Existing treatments need to be given intravenously, and the drugs are expensive and not always available in the United States. But Dr. Mendez and her collaborators have found that an existing antibiotic, pyrazinamide, may help animals suffering from leishmaniasis.

It can take years to develop a new drug, “but since this drug already exists, we could use it tomorrow. This is really groundbreaking,” says Dr. Mendez. Her lab is investigating this new treatment, finding ways to make it more effective. The drug is inexpensive and can be given orally, making treatment easier and more attainable for people worldwide.

The antibiotic, currently used to treat tuberculosis, seems to boost the host’s immune system. “This would be very attractive in situations where the host’s immune responses are compromised,” says Dr. Mendez. “HIV-Leishmania coinfections, for example, are quite common.”
Dr. Meyers-Wallen’s lab has identified a gene responsible for one reproductive disease in dogs and is closing in on another.

The Meyers-Wallen lab recently identified the gene that causes Persistent Mullerian Duct Syndrome (PMDS) in miniature schnauzers. This disease causes a male dog to develop a uterus in addition to his usual anatomy. Some affected dogs develop complications, like tumors or uterine infections, while others appear normal externally but can pass the disorder on to their offspring.

The condition starts when the dog is developing in the womb. Both male and female dogs develop Mullerian ducts, which become the uterus in females, but in males a hormone should cause the ducts to disintegrate.

“We found many years ago that these dogs do make the hormone but the body acts like it never sees it. It’s like me calling you on the telephone, but your telephone is broken so you never get the message,” says Dr. Meyers-Wallen. When the canine genome sequence became available, Dr. Meyers-Wallen’s team looked at the DNA sequence of the hormone receptor—the receiving telephone, so to speak. They found that affected dogs with PMDS have a mutation in the receptor.

Dr. Meyers-Wallen’s team has also come up with a test for the newly identified gene. Since half of males with the disease look normal externally, genetic testing can identify the affected males, as well as male and female carriers. With this knowledge, breeders can avoid passing it on to the next generation.

Understanding the disease in dogs can also help humans who have the disease. Based on the number of affected dogs who appear normal, Dr. Meyers-Wallen suggests that PMDS may be underdiagnosed in humans as well.

Dr. Meyers-Wallen’s lab also studies another reproductive problem in dogs, a “sex reversal” condition in which animals that are genetically female develop male organs. The team has identified a region of DNA that seems to be responsible, and ongoing research in the lab aims to pinpoint the exact gene.

The same genetic tools that enable Dr. Meyers-Wallen to investigate reproductive disorders can help with other genetic diseases as well. Her work with Dr. Sharon Center, in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Clinical Sciences, is advancing the understanding of a potentially fatal liver disease that affects some terrier breeds. In these dogs, blood from the digestive system does not flow correctly to the liver, leaving the dogs unable to properly metabolize drugs and food. A better understanding of the genetic basis of this disease could open the door to tests and treatments.
Dr. Parker is working on a very basic question: How do viruses cause disease? “It sometimes seems like an obvious question, but the answers are not very clear or specific,” he says. His work explores how viruses enter and kill cells, and how they spread from cell to cell within an animal.

Part of that work is on a family of viruses called reoviruses. These viruses are able to trigger apoptosis, the cell’s own self-destruct program. All animals have this program, since cells often have to die to allow others to grow.

“Viruses take advantage of this process,” says Dr. Parker, probably because this form of cell death doesn’t stimulate an immune response. The virus is then able to kill cells and spread, without being attacked itself.

Dr. Parker has found that a certain protein in the virus’s coat is responsible for triggering the cell to die. New work in Dr. Parker’s lab is focusing on other roles of the protein, including the possibility that it helps newly produced viruses to emerge from a structure known as the “viral factory.”

Reoviruses are especially interesting to Dr. Parker because they seek out cancer cells. Since cancer cells usually are difficult to kill, a virus that can cause apoptosis in just those cells may be a promising treatment for cancer.

Best of all, reoviruses cause few disease symptoms and they tend to avoid cells that are not cancerous. While infecting a cancer patient with a virus is still somewhat dangerous, Dr. Parker hopes that research on reoviruses will result in more targeted, safer treatments.

Another branch of Dr. Parker’s research focuses on feline calicivirus, which usually causes a mild, flu-like disease in cats. Some strains, though, can be dangerous and lethal.

What makes these forms of the disease so different? Dr. Parker’s lab is working on that question. With no way to tell the strains apart, shelters and catteries are stuck without a way to tell if a sick animal has the more common, mild form, or whether it has the dangerous strain and needs to be quarantined.

Dr. Parker’s work may also lead to a more effective vaccine. Although a vaccine for feline calicivirus has been available for forty years, the number of cats with the disease has not changed. This suggests that the vaccine does not guarantee protection. With a newly available map of the virus’s structure, researchers are finding possible targets for a new type of vaccine.
“Every virus that infects humans or animals induces an antibody response,” explains Dr. Parrish. Those antibodies should protect against later infections by the same virus, but sometimes they do not—as when this season’s flu virus evades the antibodies we made last year.

Dr. Parrish’s team is studying this interaction with two opposite goals in mind: helping dogs’ immune systems to better attack canine parvovirus, and in another project, allowing a helpful virus to sneak past the immune system to deliver cures for genetic diseases.

Canine parvovirus can cause severe diarrhea in adult dogs and heart failure in puppies, while its relative, feline panleukopenia virus, is responsible for a similar disease in cats. A new form of canine parvovirus has arisen in recent years, known as the CPV-2c strain, and some researchers think that the new strain is spreading quickly because it can evade the antibodies that dogs carry against older forms of the disease.

Studying the way these antibodies react and bind to the virus could lead to a more effective vaccine that protects against the new strain, as well as a better understanding of how antibodies work against viruses in general.

“We don’t have a good understanding of what makes a good antibody response,” says Dr. Parrish. “Our lab is trying to understand how antibodies react with viruses on a fundamental level.”

With this knowledge, Dr. Parrish also hopes to achieve an opposite goal: helping a virus to evade the immune system so it can be used for gene therapy.

Gene therapy uses viruses to add a gene to the DNA of an animal or person who is missing that gene or has a defective copy, as in cystic fibrosis or hemophilia. A relative of parvovirus, the adeno-associated virus (AAV), shows promise as a tool for delivery of such genes.

The problem, though, is that if a patient has already been exposed to AAV, its immune system will recognize the virus and try to destroy it. By studying how antibodies bind to the virus, Dr. Parrish hopes to find a way to keep it safe from the immune system.

Toward that goal, the Parrish lab works with Dr. Mavis Agbandje-McKenna at the University of Florida to look directly at the bond between an antibody and the capsid, or protein shell, of a virus. The technique, cryo-electron microscopy, allows a detailed view of this attachment.

“Our idea is that as we study the structure of AAV and find how it binds to the antibodies, we can use that information to modify the virus,” says Dr. Parrish. “By understanding the antibody response, we can optimize the virus and use it to cure diseases.”
A common thread in Dr. Travis's work is wildlife conservation. His research on male reproductive biology seeks to have global impacts.

By learning how sperm work, says Dr. Travis, “you can promote fertility with assisted reproductive technologies. Or go the other way and try to develop male-based contraceptives.” Both goals could help breeding programs in zoos, and both have implications for humans as well.

In an ambitious project, Dr. Travis and his team have transplanted sperm-producing stem cells from one dog into another. This feat holds promise for genetic research as well as for conservation.

Although male animals don’t make sperm until puberty, the stem cells that produce the sperm are present at birth. “You could put cells from an African hunting dog or a red wolf into a domestic dog,” says Dr. Travis, preserving the rare animal’s genome.

The technique could also provide insight into genetic diseases, some four hundred of which are shared between dogs and humans.

The Travis lab has also come up with an assay that can test for specific types of male infertility. For decades, fertility testing has focused on descriptive examinations, such as sperm count, but until recently there was no way to test whether the sperm are functionally able to do their job. This new assay exposes the sperm to stimuli they would encounter in the uterus and oviduct. This should trigger a set of changes that the assay can identify. “These changes are absolutely required for the sperm to be able to fertilize,” he says. Further research in Dr. Travis’s lab is investigating the details of how the activation process works.

Dr. Travis also extends his interest in conservation to Africa, through a multidisciplinary project that will be completed late in 2009. With the Wildlife Conservation Society, he leads a team of scientists from throughout Cornell as they address poaching and slash-and-burn agriculture in eastern Zambia by helping the poorest families to practice sustainable agriculture. Cornell veterinary students teach families how to take better care of their poultry and goats and have set up poultry vaccination programs, all resulting in healthier animals that improve both the villagers’ nutrition and incomes.

“When families don’t have enough food, up to forty percent of them poach,” says Dr. Travis. The area is home to the world’s largest hippopotamus population, as well as other animals like elephants, lions, and antelope. Some of the traps used for poaching antelopes can snare other animals as well, like African hunting dogs. Fortunately, data from the project suggest that the agricultural efforts are working; antelope populations, to name one example, are rebounding.
2008 Publications

Faculty represented in 2008:


Journal Publications:


Book Chapters:


Faculty Accomplishments 2008

Dr. Greg Acland was an invited speaker at The Glaucoma Foundation’s Fifteenth Annual Think Tank, New York City, and offered a talk on Genetic Testing at the Mars Veterinary AVMA Dinner, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dr. Doug Antczak was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board for the new Centre for Trophoblast Research, Cambridge University, United Kingdom. Additionally, Dr. Antczak was invited to lecture on his research on equine interspecies hybrids to the faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tokyo. With Professor Twink Allen of Cambridge University, Dr. Antczak made invited presentations on progress in horse breeding to the New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders’ Association and the New Zealand Equine Veterinary Association. While in New Zealand, Dr. Antczak also delivered a lecture at Massey University.

Dr. Judy Appleton was an invited participant at the Alpaca Genome Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. Dr. Appleton also spoke at the École nationale vétérinaire d’Alfort in Maisons-Alfort, France where she presented her work on Immune regulation during chronic trichinellosis. At the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois, Dr. Appleton lectured on The role of eosinophils in chronic nematode infection.

Dr. Scott Coonrod, Associate Professor, received tenure in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Biomedical Sciences.

Dr. Susana Mendez was invited to present a seminar at the SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York on The human leishmaniases: truth and myths about this complex group of diseases, and at the Instituto de Salud Carlos III in Madrid, Spain on Leishmania and nematodes: immunoparasitology studies at Cornell University.

Dr. Vicki Meyers-Wallen was selected to receive the Senior Investigator Award for Excellence in Basic Research from the European Veterinary Society for Small Animal Reproduction.

Dr. John Parker was an invited speaker at Colgate University, the University of Tel Aviv, and the Veterinary Virology Symposium at the American Society for Virology Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Parker, in collaboration with Dr. Marcelo Ehrlich at the University of Tel Aviv, was awarded a grant from the US-Israeli Binational Agricultural Research Development Fund.

Dr. Colin Parrish was invited to speak at the Keystone Meeting on Molecular Evolution as a Driving Force in Infectious Diseases in Breckenridge, Colorado; at the FASEB Summer Research Conference, Virus structure and assembly, in Saxton’s River, Vermont; and at the Predictive Evolution and Epidemiology meeting at the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Additionally, Dr. Parrish was the invited speaker at several international meetings: the Twelfth International Parvovirus Workshop, Cordoba, Spain where he also served as session Chair; the International Congress of Virology, Istanbul, Turkey where he gave the keynote address and chaired the Parvovirus session; the Department of Microbiology at The University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; and the Veterinary School at Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Dr. Colin Parrish and staff organized the American Society for Virology annual meeting at Cornell University.

Dr. Alex Travis was the featured presenter at the sixth International Symposium on Canine and Feline Reproduction in Vienna, Austria. Dr. Travis also spoke at Cornell University’s Center for Wildlife Conservation symposium and Biomedical Sciences seminar series; the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Research on Reproduction and Women’s Health seminar series; two presentations at the SANREM-CRSP Annual Meeting in the Philippines; and at Université Laval Centre de recherche en biologie de la reproduction seminar series in Quebec City, Canada.

Additionally, Dr. Alex Travis received promotion to Associate Professor with indefinite tenure in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Biomedical Sciences.
**Research Laboratories**

**Gregory M. Acland, BVSc**  
Professor of Medical Genetics  
Inherited Eye Disease Studies Unit

**Team members:**
Anna V. Kukerkova, Research Associate  
Orly Goldstein, Research Support Specialist  
Jennifer L. Johnson, Research Support Specialist  
Julie Jordan, Research Technician  
Susan E. Pearce-Kelling, part-time Research Support Specialist  
Svetlana V. Tennyshk, part-time Research Scientist  
Lucie Chevallier, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program

**Grants:**

**Douglas F. Antczak, VMD, PhD**  
Dorothy Havemeyer McConville  
Professor of Equine Medicine  
Equine Genetics Center: Equine Immunology

**Team members:**
Leela Noronha, Post-DVM PhD Candidate  
Christina Costa, Research Technician  
Donald C. Miller, Research Support Specialist  
Jennifer Cassano, Undergraduate Student  
Joy Tseng, Undergraduate Student  
Melissa Restifo, Undergraduate Student  
Cara McNamee, Summer 2008 Havemeyer Fellow  
Kari Walsh, Summer 2008 Havemeyer Fellow

**Grants:**

**Judith A. Appleton, PhD**  
Alfred H. Caspary Professor of Immunology  
Laboratory of Mucosal Immunity, Nematodes and Immunoparasitology

**Team members:**
Maria Valeria Fabre, Postdoctoral Associate  
Andrew Moorhead, Postdoctoral Associate  
Lisa K. Blum, PhD Candidate  
Nebia Gebreselasie, PhD Candidate  
Lucille F. Gagliardo, Research Technician  
Shirley Cheng, Undergraduate Student  
Lucas Dawson, Undergraduate Student  
Rama El Yafawi, Undergraduate Student  
Kate Justus, Undergraduate Student  
Christopher Orapello, Undergraduate Student  
Michelle Patterson, Undergraduate Student  
Pothamet Khositaratanakool, Visiting Graduate Student

**Grants:**
Susan K. Bliss, DVM, PhD
Senior Research Associate
Laboratory of Immunoparasitology

Team members:
Diana Douglas (nee Brunsman), Research Technician
Elsa Garcia, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program

Grant:

Scott A. Coonrod, PhD
Associate Professor of Epigenetics and Reproductive Biology
Laboratory of Epigenetics and Reproductive Biology

Team members:
Rui Kan, Research Associate
Brian Cherrington, Postdoctoral Associate
Eric Morency, Postdoctoral Fellow
Xuesen Zhang, Postdoctoral Associate
Boram Kim, PhD Candidate
John L. McElwee, PhD Candidate
Lynne J. Anguish, Research Support Specialist
Ashley Palmer, Research Technician

Christopher J. Torre, Research Technician
Robert Brody, Undergraduate Student
Riaz Karmali, Undergraduate Student
Emily van den Blink, Undergraduate Student
Piraye Yurttus, Visiting PhD Candidate, Weill Medical
Hannes Bergmann, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program
Jennell Bigrigg, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program

Grants:

George Lust, PhD
Professor of Physiological Chemistry
The Albert C. Bostwick Foundation Laboratory:
Canine Hip Dysplasia and Osteoarthritis

Grants:

Douglas McGregor, PhD
Director of Leadership and Training Initiatives
Leadership and Training Initiatives

Team members:
Adriana Blossom, part-time Administrative Assistant
Christina Bainbridge, part-time Administrative Assistant
Cynthia Kwong, part-time Administrative Assistant
Jessica Mooney, part-time Administrative Assistant
Melissa Restifo, part-time Administrative Assistant

Grants:

Foundation/Corporate Support to Dr. McGregor
Susana Mendez, DVM, PhD
Assistant Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases
Laboratory of Immunology of Animal Models of Infectious Diseases

Team members:
Wenhui Wu, Postdoctoral Associate
Lu Huang, PhD Candidate
Meleana Hinchman, part time Lab Manager
David Byun, Undergraduate Student
Jasmine Chiang, Undergraduate Student
Patricia Green, Undergraduate Student
Diana Magee, Undergraduate Student
Thomas McConville, Undergraduate Student
Byung Joo (Justin) Nahm, Undergraduate Student
Mark Scourah, Undergraduate Student
Hussaina J. Makun, Visiting Fulbright Scholar
José Maria Alunda, Visiting Scientist
Jennifer Irving, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program

Grants:

Vicki Meyers-Wallen, VMD, PhD
Associate Professor of Genetics and Reproduction
Laboratory for the Study of Inherited Canine Reproductive Diseases

Team member:
Shashikant Pujar, Research Associate

Grants:

John S. L. Parker, BVMS, PhD
Assistant Professor of Virology
Laboratory of Virology: Feline Caliciviruses and Mammalian Orthoreoviruses

Team members:
Louis G. Hom, Postdoctoral Associate
Jae-Won Kim, Postdoctoral Associate
Susanne Moessmer, PhD Candidate
Robert J. Osisboff, DVM/PhD Candidate
Meagan L. Wisniewski, PhD Candidate
Brenda Werner, Research Support Specialist
Sally Iverson, Veterinary Student
Anne Poujol, Foreign Veterinary Student Externship
Jegath Athilingham, Undergraduate Student
Stephen Berds, Undergraduate Student
Sharilyn Brandel, Undergraduate Student
Meg Crapster-Pregont, (Hughes Scholar, Undergraduate Student)
Patrick Lightfoot, Undergraduate Student
Sarah Mattmiller, (McNair Scholar, Undergraduate Student)

Undergraduate Student
Rachel Mays, Undergraduate Student
Anna Heymer, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008 Leadership Program

Grants:

Colin R. Parrish, PhD
John M. Olin Professor of Virology
Albert C. Bostwick Laboratory of Molecular Biology: Canine and Feline Paroviruses

Team members:
Sang-Bom (Michael) Lyi, Research Associate
Laura B. Goodman, Postdoctoral Associate
Carole E. Harbison, DVM/PhD Candidate
Karol Hoelzer, Post-DVM/PhD Candidate
Christian Nelson, PhD Candidate
Karla M. Stucker, DVM/PhD Candidate
Virginia Scarpino, Research Technician
Wendy S. Weichert, Research Support Specialist
Isaac Greenhut, temporary Technician
Shelagh M. Johnston, part-time Office Assistant
Melanie Ho, Undergraduate Student
Natalie Johnson, Undergraduate Student
Jason Kaelber, Undergraduate Student
Siddharth Khasnavis, Undergraduate Student
Tyler Lillie, Undergraduate Student
Eveliina Minkkinen, Visiting Fellow
Ming Lui, Veterinary Student, Summer 2008
Leadership Program

Grants:


Mary Sloane and Peggy Reed, Baker Institute Advisory Council members, host luncheon
Mary Sloane and Peggy Reed hosted a special luncheon presentation for friends, Institute donors, and dog enthusiasts at the Aspetuck Valley Country Club in Weston, Connecticut. Dr. Doug Antczak, Baker Institute Director, and the Dorothy Havemeyer McConville Professor of Equine Medicine, and Dr. Rodney Page, Alexander de Lahunta Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences and Director of the Sprecher Institute for Comparative Cancer Research, gave presentations on equine and canine health. Guests enjoyed the beautiful club, delicious food, and informative conversation.

Dog lovers join the Baker Institute at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship
For the second year, faculty and staff from the Baker Institute for Animal Health and the College of Veterinary Medicine ventured to southern California for the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship. Long Beach welcomed breeders, owners, handlers and dog aficionados to enjoy three national AKC events: the AKC Agility Invitational; the AKC National Obedience Invitational; and the main event, a conformation dog show. Agility, one of the fastest-growing dog sports, features dogs with great conditioning, coordination, and concentration as they maneuver through obstacles. Obedience tests the relationship between a dog and its handler. The dogs must respond to commands such as, “sit,” “heel,” and “down,” in an environment filled with distractions. During conformation shows, judges are looking at how well a dog matches the ideal size, color, disposition, proportion, structure, and movement described in the breed standard. This year Holly (Ch Cookieland Seaside Hollyberry), a Pointer, took home Best In Show.

Not only were guests treated to exciting competitions, but they enjoyed an Institute-hosted hospitality room; a private tour of the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship; entertaining dog demonstrations; and “Meet the Breeds,” an up-close and personal look at all 140 AKC registered breeds. Each breed has a booth staffed by breed experts, breeders, and owners. Guests can pet the dogs, chat with experts, and learn more about each of the breeds.

Leela Noronha wins prestigious NIH award
Leela Noronha, DVM, received a National Research Service Award, granted by the National Institutes for Health. Dr. Noronha is one of three female equine researchers at the College of Veterinary Medicine to earn this accolade, intended to bridge a researcher from mentorship to independence.

Dr. Noronha, who works with Dr. Doug Antczak, focuses her research on equine immunology—specifically, the immunological tolerance of a mother to her fetus. During pregnancy, the mother not only tolerates a fetus, but nurtures this organism comprised of her own and foreign genetic material. Dr. Antczak’s lab has raised this question: why does the mother not reject this foreign tissue as bodies frequently do with organ transplants?

“With transplants, doctors wait for the perfect genetic match,” said Dr. Noronha, “and, still, rejection is an issue and the recipient must take immunosuppressant drugs forever. The goal of our research is to gain a detailed understanding of the immunological mechanisms of maternal-fetal tolerance. Such information can lead to applications in fields as diverse as infertility, contraception, transplantation, cancer and auto-immune diseases.”

More specifically, Dr. Noronha’s research with Dr. Antczak will help researchers understand how to nurture some foreign materials (like organ transplants) and how to eliminate other foreign bodies (like cancer tumors).
Dr. Karin Hoelzer wins Young Investigator Award

Dr. Karin Hoelzer was awarded a Young Investigator Award and presented her research at the 2008 Merck-Merial NIH Scholars Symposium in August. Dr. Hoelzer, a graduate research assistant and PhD candidate, offered The road to viral emergence—understanding the emergence of canine parvovirus, which is based on research conducted in the laboratory of Dr. Colin Parrish and in close collaboration with Dr. Edward Holmes, Professor of Biology at the Pennsylvania State University.

Prior to the 1970s, the ancestor of the parvovirus that we now know as canine parvovirus was found only among cats. Today canine parvovirus is found among dogs and relatives of dogs throughout the world, with slightly different forms of the virus appearing in different geographic regions.

The Merck-Merial NIH Veterinary Scholars Symposium brings together outstanding scientists and veterinary scholars who have been engaged in mentored research experiences over the course of the summer in colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States and Canada. Veterinary scholars share their research findings in poster sessions and have the chance to hear and interact with scientists from diverse fields.

Bicknese Prize winner

Yeun Hee Kim is the 2008 Bicknese Prize winner. As a member of Dr. Alex Travis's lab, Kim's research focused on preserving male genetic information with spermatogonial stem cells.

These cells, which male animals use to produce sperm, may one day be used in conservation and as a tool for biomedical research. The cells can be transplanted from one animal to another. Kim's research centered on developing these transplantation technologies.

Kim used the Bicknese Prize to purchase a new computer, to help her analyze data and prepare manuscripts for publication.

Kim is now working in Dr. Diane Krause's laboratory at Yale University as a postdoctoral fellow. She is studying hematopoietic stem cells as an extension of stem cell research.

The Bicknese Family Prize was established in 2005 by Dr. Joanne Bicknese, CALS ’76, DVM ’78, MS, ELS, as an annual award for research activities of a woman scientist-in-training. The award aims to provide support at a critical point in the trainee's academic development and to help launch her into a successful career. Yeun Hee Kim was chosen in recognition of her cumulative efforts, excellent Institute citizenship, and exemplary academic performance.

Dr. Bicknese, one of the Institute's most devoted and generous supporters, is a current member of the Institute's Advisory Council and served six years as chairperson during the Institute's fiftieth anniversary and the building of the new wing. The fund honors Dr. Bicknese's parents, Helen and Louis Bicknese, and her aunt and uncle, Grace and Carl Bicknese.

American Society of Virology conference held at Cornell

In July 2008, Drs. Colin Parrish, John M. Olin Professor of Virology, and Sondra Lazarowitz, a professor of Plant Pathology, hosted the American Society of Virology's Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Society at Cornell University. Over the course of the five-day conference, approximately 1,400 participants selected among 540 oral presentations and 400 posters presented in seminar, workshop, and symposium format. Esteemed guests such as Dr. Mary Estes, Professor of Molecular Virology and Microbiology at the Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Mavis Agbandje-McKenna, Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Florida, were featured daily. Dr. Parrish, with help from his administrative assistant Shelagh Johnston, provided outstanding opportunities for formal and informal discussions to take place at the receptions, meals, and presentations that were part of the annual event. Founded in 1981, the American Society for Virology provides a forum for dialogue among investigators of human, animal, insect, plant, fungal, and bacterial viruses, whether the research involves the use of clinical, ecological, biological or biochemical approaches. Cornell University has a long history with ASV, having hosted its first meeting in 1982.
Graduate Students Complete PhDs

**Linda Hunter:** January 2008
Graduate field: Comparative Biomedical Sciences
Major advisor: Dr. Vicki Meyers-Wallen
Thesis title: *Mapping of cataract genes in the canine genome, and molecular analysis of PAX6 for causal association with cataract, aniridia, and other ocular diseases.*
Current position: Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Clinical Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

**Vimal Selvaraj:** January 2008
Graduate field: Immunology
Major advisor: Dr. Alex Travis
Thesis title: *Membrane organization and dynamics in mammalian sperm.*
Current position: Postdoctoral Associate, Shriners Hospital for Children, Sacramento, CA.

Dual-Degree Program Graduate Student Completes DVM

Karla Stucker completed her DVM degree in May 2008 in Large and Small Animal Medicine and Surgery. She is now working toward her PhD, anticipated by August 2011.

132nd Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show

In February 2008, friends, donors, Advisory Council members, and dog lovers joined the Baker Institute and the College of Veterinary Medicine at the 132nd Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. Guests enjoyed the judging and finals of the show from the Institute's sky box suite and were able to get a behind-the-scenes tour of the show's benching area. More than seventy people enjoyed the prestigious show and cheered on the fifteen-inch Beagle, Uno, (*Ch K-Run's Park Me In First*), to "Best In Show" victory.

June 2008 trip to Greenwich Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show, Obedience, and Rally

For the second time, Dr. Doug Antczak, Director, and Lynne Williams, Director of Development and Public Affairs, staffed the Baker Institute booth at the American Kennel Club-sanctioned show held at Taylor Farm Park in Norwalk, Connecticut. Dr. Antczak and Lynne spoke with donors and friends of the Institute who stopped by to visit, and met new friends interested in the Institute. Institute Advisory Council member, Peggy Reed, and long-time supporters of the Baker Institute, Ellen Frenkel and Joy Brewster, are officers of the Greenwich Kennel Club. The Institute receives Greenwich Kennel Club funds to support canine research. Following the day at the show, Dr. Antczak and Lynne attended the prestigious Belmont Stakes horse race and watched Da'Tara take home the victory over Triple Crown-hopeful Big Brown.

Renovation of Institute offices

The Baker Institute main office and reception area was renovated in 2008. Designed by HOLT Architects, the space is modern, functional, and a fitting representation of the Institute’s illustrious history. Purposeful work-stations, abundant storage, and contemporary designs provide staff with the tools to perform their jobs most efficiently in a comfortable work environment.

Fall Steeplechase in Aiken, South Carolina

In October, Dr. Antczak traveled to Aiken, South Carolina for the 17th Renewal of the Aiken Fall Steeplechase. The prestigious Holiday Cup is a one-day event, with a pre-race party on Friday night, featuring several races and including a carriage parade. Steeplechasing mixes the speed of the flat track with the precision of jumping to create a high-speed, high-stakes race. Dr. Antczak joined Institute Advisory Council member and Aiken Steeplechase Association Board of Directors member, Albert Bostwick, in furthering the legacy and tradition of steeplechasing in Aiken.
Volunteer and Donor Highlights

Judy Wilpon
An alumna of the University of Michigan, with a degree in English Literature, Judy Wilpon has always been an animal lover, active in horse and dog competitions for most of her life. She has also been an Advisory Council member and donor to the Baker Institute for Animal Health for almost twenty years.

Judy first learned about the Institute from her veterinarian on Long Island, Dr. Hank Travis, a former Baker Institute Advisory Council member, who introduced her to Dr. Doug McGregor, then Director of the Baker Institute. Later, Judy joined the Institute’s Advisory Council, an experience she describes as fascinating and educational. She states, “The people I’ve met are wonderful and so dedicated to their research. They work hard to make life better for our animals. Nothing gives unconditional love like dogs do, and I want to do all I can to help them live longer, healthier lives.” It is her love of animals and her support for cancer research at Baker that led her to endow the Judy Wilpon Professorship in Cancer Biology.

Judy experienced the devastation of canine cancer firsthand. Already a supporter of the Baker Institute, when Judy bred her beloved Golden Retrievers, she donated the proceeds from the sale of the puppies to the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Baker Institute. Every puppy from those three separate litters died of cancer. (As a result, Judy’s dogs are now bred from different bloodlines which seem less susceptible to the disease.) While she is grateful for the health of her own dogs, she remains passionate about supporting the search for better diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of cancer in animals.

Judy learned about Dr. Coonrod’s cancer research through friends at Cornell-Weill Medical College where he started his research in cancer cell biology before coming to the Baker Institute. Dr. Coonrod’s work in developmental biology and breast cancer research explores the idea that epigenetics—tiny chemical changes to DNA that affect how a gene is expressed without changing its sequence—may unearth missing pieces to the puzzle of breast cancer. While this work focuses on dogs, it has the potential to improve testing and treatment of human cancers as well. Judy’s sister is a breast cancer survivor, so the opportunity to support cancer research on both humans and animals was a perfect fit.

The Wilpon Family Foundation gift also supports training programs in the College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Clinical Sciences for post-graduate veterinarians specializing in two areas of cancer treatment: Medical Oncology and Radiation Oncology. “We’re blessed to be able to fund these programs, trying to make life better for people and animals,” she says.
Natalie Yakimoff bequest to the Baker Institute

Natalie Yakimoff left behind an enduring legacy. By honoring the memory of her beloved pets Rover, Peer, Twiggy, Yoda, Zorba, Alfie, Terry, Vixen, Hutchie, and Shaka Zulu, through a bequest to the Institute, she has jumpstarted an important fundraising campaign.

Her kindness will help fulfill a million dollar goal toward funding the Judy Wilpon Professor of Cancer Biology at the Baker Institute.

Along with Ms. Yakimoff’s gift in 2008, the Institute received generous bequests from Dr. R. George Wiswall and Ms. Emily R. Reading. Their support has made a significant impact on the Institute, and has provided a means to maintain and strengthen the Institute’s preeminent reputation.

Jane Engel

When Jane Engel took her yellow Labrador, Valerie, to the Blessing of the Animals at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City, she worried that the dog would be fearful of the large space, the strange animals on either side of her in the pews, or perhaps the elephant parading down the aisle. But her worries were unfounded: Valerie showed unusual calmness and familiarity with the situation.

“I know she has been in a church before,” says Engel. “She was just perfect.”

Valerie was once a seeing-eye dog, before her career was cut short by canine hepatitis. Engel adopted her eight years ago, and Valerie continues to inspire her by showing how dedicated and capable a dog can be.

“I’m amazed by dogs who lead the blind and the hearing impaired, so that people can maintain their independence. Their ability and the training they’re capable of is awe-inspiring,” she says. Engel often notices vestiges of that training in her dog: Valerie not only knows churches and refuses to chase squirrels, she also stops at every street corner on her morning walk to sit and carefully watch the traffic.

Supporting the Baker Institute was “a natural,” says Engel, as a dog lover with multiple Cornell graduates in the family. Engel’s son and two daughters each own two dogs. “We’re a very dog-oriented family,” she says.

“I think Baker has always been very forward-looking in canine and animal health. The research they do enhances the lives of dogs, and filters down to people,” she says, remembering that she was particularly impressed by work done in Dr. Acland’s lab investigating the genes that cause blindness in Briard dogs. The resulting gene therapy techniques have already restored sight to a handful of dogs and humans.

In addition to her involvement with Baker, Engel has also served for twenty-five years on the board of the American Kennel Club’s Museum of the Dog, which is dedicated to art and literature portraying dogs. She also works with the Bronx Zoo, supporting an internship that allows students to work with the curator of mammals at the zoo.

Greenwich Kennel Club supports the Baker Institute

Since 1999, the Greenwich Kennel Club (GKC) has generously donated funds to the Baker Institute and its research programs.

Peggy Reed, President of the Greenwich Kennel Club and member of the Baker Institute Advisory Council, describes why GKC supports the Institute: “The research being conducted at the Baker Institute is forward-thinking and has immediate and long-term effects on our pets. From vaccines to genetic tests, the Institute continues to be a leader in the scientific community, and an invaluable source of information for members of the Greenwich Kennel Club and dog owners worldwide.”

The relationship between the GKC and the Baker Institute has flourished over the last ten years, with the Institute attending the Greenwich Kennel Club’s dog show the past four years. Furthermore, some of the Institute’s most dedicated supporters, Ellen Frenkel and Joy Brewster, are officers on the GKC Board.

Since 1930, the Greenwich Kennel Club has hosted an all-breed show featuring conformation, obedience, and performance events. Today, this well-established outdoor dog show is one of the largest held in the New England area.

The Institute receives support from kennel clubs interested in furthering canine research and preventing diseases in dogs. The Finger Lakes Kennel Club, Mid-Hudson Kennel Club, and the Collie Club of America, among other kennel clubs, made generous gifts to the Institute in 2008.

In addition to her involve-
ment with Baker, Engel has also served for twenty-five years on the board of the American Kennel Club’s Museum of the Dog, which is dedicated to art and literature portraying dogs. She also works with the Bronx Zoo, supporting an internship that allows students to work with the curator of mammals at the zoo.

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Our success in improving animal health through research is dependent, in large measure, upon our association with practicing veterinarians who keep our faculty and staff aware of important issues in veterinary medicine. The Institute’s Memorial Gift Program is a valuable vehicle for facilitating communications between the research environment and veterinary practices. New treatments and techniques such as gene therapy, genetic testing, and counseling for inherited diseases, are advanced through support from this program.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following veterinarians and animal practices for their contributions to the Institute’s Memorial Gift Program in 2008.

A & A Veterinary Hospital: Robert B. Altman, DVM
Abundance of Care Pet Hospital: Larry Mauer, DVM and Allen Wachtler, DVM
Adirondack Animal Hospital: James R. Glendening, DVM
All Pets Medical Center
American Animal Hospital: Brian T. Votnick, DVM
Amsterdam Animal Hospital, P.C.: John A. Contino, DVM
Animal Care Center: Nancy D. Kay, DVM
Animal Care Clinic: Merrill K. Johnson, DVM
Animal Clinic of Mt. Vernon: Alan Meyer, DVM
Animal General: Steve C. Feldman, DVM
Animal General
Animal General of East Norwicht
Animal Hospital of Kent: Mark I. Feldman, DVM
Animal Hospital of Niskayuna: Ronald Scharf, DVM
Animal Hospital of Pittsford: Paul Black, DVM
Animal Kind Vet Hospital: Mark C. Gibson, DVM
Animal Medical of New City: Howard J. Gittelman, DVM
Animal Medicine & Surgery of Little Neck: Edward Parver, DVM
Animal Wellness of Skaneateles
Aqueduct Animal Hospital: Franklin Rapp, DVM
Ardda Animal Hospital: James P. Kutryba, DVM
Arlington Dog & Cat Hospital: Herbert Leary, DVM, Marguerite Hoey, DVM and Rachel Eski, DVM
Arlington South Veterinary Hospital: Angela S. Milligan, DVM
Arrowhead Veterinary Clinic: John W. Paeplov, DVM
Aspetuck Animal Hospital: Michael F. Gorra, DVM
Baldwin Animal Hospital: Neal J. Salas, DVM
Baldwin Harbor Animal Hospital: Leslie B. Dattner, DVM
Batavia Animal Hospital: Raymond Pray, DVM
Bay Street Animal Hospital
Bayview Animal Hospital
Bellevose Animal Hospital: Andrew Karmin, DVM
Berkeley Dog and Cat Hospital: Richard N. Benjamin, DVM
Blair Animal Hospital: John W. Wells Jr., VMD
Blandford Animal Hospital: Hazel Holman, VMD
Blue Cross Small Animal Clinic: Wm. James Brown, DVM
Bolton Veterinary Hospital: David S. Coley, DVM
Bond Animal Hospital: Douglas G. Aspros, DVM
Briar Patch Veterinary Hospital: Carolyn A. McMaster, DVM
Brockton Animal Hospital: Ronald Hirschberg, DVM
Brook Farm Veterinary Center: Donald E. Kanouse, DVM
Bryan Animal Hospital: Carolyn Slavin, VMD
Burlington Veterinary Center: Richard K. Escherick, DVM
Burrstone Animal Hospital: Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital: William Randall, DVM, Steve Smith, DVM, Sue Ferraglio, DVM and Caroline Barnum, DVM
Cape Ann Veterinary Hospital: Jeffrey B. French and Barbara J. Reid, DVM
Carnegie Hill Veterinarians: Alexander J. Miller, DVM
Cassidy Animal Care: Sharon Capone, DVM
Central Animal Hospital: Michael Wolitz, VMD
Central Virginia Veterinary: Samuel Baum, DVM
Centreville Animal Hospital: Fred G. Garrison, DVM
Clark Animal Care Center: Amy D. Charpentier, DVM and Kathleen E. Wakefield, DVM
Clarkson Veterinary Hospital: Jess Buttery, DVM
Clover Hill Animal Hospital: Ann Ascher, DVM
Cobbleskill Veterinary Clinic: Vernon R. Dune, VMD and Kevin S. Baldwin, DVM
Companion Animal Hospital: Companion Animal Hospital
Companion Animal Hospital: Earl Mummert and Margaret Mummert, DVM
Companion Animal Hospital of Virginia: James F. Cone, DVM
Corto-Darien Veterinary Clinic: Barbara Scheffler, DVM
Countryside Animal Clinic: R. A. Swanson, DVM
Croton Animal Hospital: Bruce Hoskins, DVM
Davis Companion Animal Hospital: Brad Davis, DVM
Deer Park Animal Hospital: Scott Rosen, DVM, Cindy Meyer, DVM and Lori Goeders, DVM
Delmar Veterinary Associates
Eagle Animal Hospital: David D. Matusis, DVM
Eagle Rock Veterinary Hospital: Howard Miller, DVM
East Meadow Animal Hospital: William J. Thonsen, DVM
Easthampton Animal Hospital: James G. Hayden, DVM
Easton Animal Hospital: Mitchell Greenberg, VMD
Eastview Veterinary Clinic: Glenn Fahnstock, DVM
Ellicott Small Animal Hospital: Robert Stevens, DVM
Englewood Animal Hospital: Robert Groskin, DVM
Estates Animal Hospital: Barry Eisenkraft, DVM
Fairfield Veterinary Hospital: Timothy Plunkett, DVM
Fairview Veterinary Hospital: Robin L. Lovelock, DVM and Mark Pessin, DVM
Farmington Veterinary Clinic: Andrea Bergman, DVM
Farmingtonville Animal Hospital: Richard Jacobson and Dennis Zwie, DVM
Flower Valley Veterinary Clinic: James J. Burns, DVM
Ford Veterinary Associates: Walter K. McCarthy, DVM
Fountain House Veterinary Clinic: Alan Tausz, DVM
Gearhart Hospital Veterinary Clinic: Martha S. Gehrart, DVM
Georgetown Veterinary Hospital: Stanley J. Truffini, DVM, and Carol J. Gamez, DVM
German Flatts Vet Clinic: Nicholas C. Chuff, DVM
Glen Animal Hospital
Godspeed Mobile Veterinary: Pamela N. Dumont, DVM, B.J. Schiller, DVM, Chantal J. Mullins, DVM and Erin B. Ewens, DVM
Goodman Animal Hospital, Ltd.: L. William Goodman, DVM
Goosepond Animal Hospital: Howard Rothenberg, DVM, Christopher Alwang, DVM, Marco Scarano, DVM and Kevin Carr, DVM
Goshen Animal Clinic: Kenneth Ostroff, DVM
Great Neck Animal Hospital: Brian Rind, DVM
Greece Animal Hospital: David Kramer, VMD
Dr. and Mrs. Martin Gruber
Hamilton Animal Hospital: Frances S. Marturana, DVM and Gerard E. Kolb, DVM
Harlingen Veterinary Clinic: Christine A. Newman, DVM, Kristen Ripperger, DVM, Stephen Schwirk, DVM, Lauren Feldman, VMD, Charles T. Schenck, DVM and Carole Zydiak, DVM
Hartsdale Veterinary Hospital
Hawthorn Animal Hospital: James M. Jorgenson, DVM
William Herbold, DVM
Highland Animal Hospital: Kathryn J. Smith, DVM
Hillsborough Veterinary Hospital: Charles Schwirk, DVM
Hilton Veterinary Hospital: Susan Cousins, DVM
Home Veterinary Services: Jeanne Baines, VMD
Huntington Animal Hospital: Jeffrey M. Kramer, DVM
Irondequoit Animal Hospital
Linda Jacobson, DVM
Jeffersonville Animal Hospital: Richard L. Schwalb, DVM
Katonah Veterinary Group: David Sachs, DVM
Keating Animal Hospital: Mary Keating, DVM
Mark Hefaf, DVM
Layhill Animal Hospital: Robert A. Adelman, DVM
Leicester Animal Clinic: George M. Yancey, DVM
Lexington Animal Hospital: Sheryl H. Carls, DVM
Linwood Animal Hospital: Carol A. Cookingham, DVM
Locust Valley Veterinary Clinic: Stuart E. Gross, DVM
Lynden Veterinary Clinic: Eric M. Davis, DVM
Manchester Veterinary Clinic: Joshua Atz, Cornell ’84, Dr. Dana Babuska, Cornell ’84, Dr. Alexis Souther, Tufts ’03
Manetto Hill Animal Hospital: Neil Weiss, DVM
Manhasset Animal Hospital: Robert L. Henrixick, DVM
Manheim Pike Veterinary Hospital: Manlius Veterinary Hospital: Jennifer Goetz, DVM
Manorville Pet Vet: Pamela Moks, DVM
March Hospital for Animals: Mark Milwicks and Kimberly Taggart, DVM
Matawan Animal Hospital: Barry N. Komp, VMD
Mataapossett Animal Hospital
Meadowridge Veterinary Clinic, P.C.
Medway Animal Hospital: Michael P. Robinson, DVM
Meker Veterinary Clinic: Gafur N. Memon, DVM
Middle River Veterinary Hospital: Kathryn Dobyns, DVM
Middletown Veterinary Hospital: Michael Brothers, DVM
Milford Animal Hospital: R. A. Dubensky, DVM
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(in memory of Silkee)  
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(in memory of Mercury and Missy)  
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(in memory of Kinickie)  
Patricia Caine  
(in memory of Shelby)  
Alyssa Calio  
(in memory of Debby Simon)  
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(in memory of Charlotte Lounsbury)  
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Gail Cameron  
(in memory of Henry)  
Charlene Campbell  
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Campbell  
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(in memory of Debby Simon)  
Forrest and Bev Canepari  
(in memory of George)  
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Mr. and Mrs. Donald Capra  
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(in memory of Janie Jones)  
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Terry Carpenter  
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Linda Conger
Patricia Como
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Mid-Hudson Kennel Association
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Jane Miller
Sara Sparkowski
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(in memory of Big Bertha)
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Dr. and Mrs. Carl Zymet
Dear donors and friends,

Nothing brings comfort like the unconditional love of a dog, a cat, or any other cherished pet. In their eyes, we are the most important people in the world—at least for that moment while we are near the treat jar.

We all know the depth of feeling we have for our pets, and that they have for us. That’s what makes us animal lovers—a breed unto our own. In earnest, I am happy to say that every time I am attending a dog show, an Institute event, or just corresponding on the phone or via e-mail with one of you, I know that we connect and understand each other, because of our shared affection for these creatures. Let me tell you, it’s a great feeling to be surrounded by such like-minded people!

As I write, another Thanksgiving holiday has passed, and we all have so much to be grateful for. At the top of my list are the wonderful, generous donors who support the Baker Institute. You might expect such sentiment from a development officer, but read the stories in this report and be assured: our esteemed faculty, superb graduate trainees, exceptional undergraduate students and technicians, who conduct research on animal health issues, are grateful to you too. Scientists, administrators, support staff and—above all—the animals, are willfully and forever indebted to you. Your loyal support, through gifts great and small, reaps a harvest beyond measure.

It is often said that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” At the Baker Institute, we are not truly whole without you. As champions of our cause to improve the health of animals, your support—financial and otherwise—sustains us in every way.

Thank you so very much.

Lynne S. Williams
Director of Development and Public Affairs

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Dear friends,

For so many of us—individuals and institutions—2008 commenced with a wave of optimism, only to diffuse, and test our spirits in the last four months of the year. Despite the global economic crisis that ensued (and lingers yet), the Baker Institute stands firm in our commitment to basic and applied research for the benefit of our pets.

Cancer, genetics, fertility, infectious disease, virology, wildlife conservation—even blindness: these are the domain of Baker Institute study. As you have learned in this report, scientific questions often lead to ever more and intriguing questions. But, although the Baker Institute may be described as an impressive research campus, it is no ivory tower; the results of our study have real-world, practical applications today, as well as far-reaching promise for the future of both animals and people.

Consider, for instance, Twilight, the superstar of Doug Antczak’s research herd, and living source of the horse genome map. Or, Lancelot, the dog cured of congenital night blindness through the application of gene therapy developed by Greg Acland. Or future generations of miniature schnauzers who, through a genetic test developed in Vicki Meyer-Wallen’s lab, may be spared from a syndrome causing male dogs to develop uteruses. Or the people of eastern Zambia, who—right now—though the insight and outreach from Alex Travis’s lab—are rearing healthier livestock for better nutrition, increased income, and reduced poaching of wild species.

The breadth of the research, and the range of its impact, is astounding. But the mission is made possible only through your giving—our giving.

In an age like no other, your generosity and loyalty earns our deepest thanks.

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David Behnke
Advisory Council Vice Chair

Richard Henry, DVM
Advisory Council Chair
Revenue Summary

- Close to 45% of our income comes from competitive research grants.
- The percent of endowment income was less in 2008, compared to recent years, as our grant funding increased.
- Private donations are gifts from individuals, veterinary practices, kennel clubs, foundations and corporations.
- College support represents funds from the College of Veterinary Medicine for faculty salaries.
- Indirect costs represent the non-research expenses associated with conducting research at Cornell. This usually increases when grant support increases.
- Other sources represent miscellaneous income, such as royalties.

Expense Summary

- More than 75% of our budget continues to be directed towards our research programs, which allows us to maintain a leadership position in both basic and applied research for companion animals.
- In 2008, we used about 15% of our research budget to enhance and complement our research programs funded by competitive research grants.
- Infrastructure costs were slightly higher in 2008, compared to recent years, because we renovated the administrative space for our support staff. In total, however, we spent less than 25% of our budget on support costs such as building maintenance, utilities, administrative and public affairs staff and programs.
The Baker Institute Advisory Council is comprised of scientists and veterinarians at the forefront of the animal and human health worlds. It also includes devoted pet owners, accomplished dog and horse breeders, exhibitors, and dog trainers and behaviorists, a number of whom are Cornell University and College of Veterinary Medicine alumni. They provide invaluable guidance, financial support, and assistance to the director and staff of the Institute, ensuring that our research programs, facilities, and outreach are not only the best possible today, but that we have the knowledge and insight to prepare the Institute for the future.
Faculty, Staff and Student Directory

Administration

Douglas F. Antczak
Director and Dorothy Havemeyer McConville Professor of Equine Medicine:
BA, Cornell University; VMD, University of Pennsylvania; PhD, Cambridge University (UK)

Joseph E. Bennett
Facilities Manager:
AAALAS accreditation

Jane M. Miller
Administrative Manager:
BS, MPS, Cornell University

Lynne S. Williams
Director of Development and Public Affairs:
BA, Seton Hill College; MA, Slippery Rock University

Research Units

Infectious Diseases and Immunology

Albert C. Bostwick Laboratory of Molecular Biology: Canine and Feline Paroviruses

Colin R. Parrish
John M. Olin Professor of Virology:
BSc, Massey University (New Zealand); PhD, Cornell University

Sang-Bom (Michael) Lyi
Research Associate:
PhD, Cornell University

Laura B. Goodman
Postdoctoral Associate:
BS, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; PhD, Cornell University

Carole E. Harbison
DVM/PhD Candidate:
BS, Oberlin College

Karin Hoelzer
Post-DVM PhD Candidate:
DVM, Hannover Veterinary School (Germany)

Christian Nelson
PhD Candidate:
BS, Cornell University; PhD, Cornell University (1/09)

Karla M. Stucker
DVM/PhD Candidate:
BS, Cornell University; DVM, Cornell University (5/08)

Virginia Scarpino
Research Technician:
BS, Edinboro State College; MA, SUNY College at Geneseo

Wendy S. Weichert
Research Support Specialist:
BS, Cornell University

Equine Genetics Center: Equine Immunology

Douglas F. Antczak
Dorothy Havemeyer McConville Professor of Equine Medicine:
BA, Cornell University; VMD, University of Pennsylvania; PhD, Cambridge University (UK)

Leela Noronha
Post-DVM PhD Candidate:
ScB with Honors, Brown University; DVM, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

Donald C. Miller
Research Support Specialist:
Cornell University

Christina Costa
Research Technician:
BS, SUNY at Buffalo

Laboratory of Immunology of Animal Models of Infectious Diseases

Susana Mendez
Assistant Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases:
DVM, PhD, University Complutense of Madrid

Meleana Hinchman
Lab Manager:
BS, Cornell University

Lu Huang
PhD Candidate:
BS, Zhejiang University, China

Wenhui Wu
Postdoctoral Associate:
MD, Bengbu Medical College (China)

Laboratory of Immunoparasitology

Susan K. Bliss
Sr. Research Associate:
BA, Lawrence University; DVM, PhD, Cornell University

Diana Douglas (nee Brunsman)
Research Technician:
BS, Truman State University

Leadership and Training Initiatives

Douglas D. McGregor
Director of Leadership and Training Initiatives:
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**Laboratory of Reproductive Biology**

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- Chinatsu Mukai Kazama  
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- Russell F. Haus  
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- Wayne C. Weldon  
  Custodian

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- Sharilyn Brandel  
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- David Byun  
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- Jennifer Cassano  
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- Shirley Cheng  
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- Jasmine Chiang  
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- Meg Crabbe-Pregont  
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Lauren Wu  
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The Baker Institute’s McConville Barn, a 19th century historic structure restored in the mid-1980s with generous gifts from Mrs. Dorothy Russell Havemeyer McConville. It is home to the unique herd of horses used for studies of the immunology of pregnancy and the Horse Genome Project.
The research campus of the Baker Institute for Animal Health, with Cornell University and then Cayuga Lake, one of the eleven Finger Lakes of upstate New York, in the distance.