

# NEW YORK STATE VETERINARY COLLEGE AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

The Holiday Season of 1935



DEAR ALUMNUS:

Thanksgiving Day has just passed and I am reminded that another year has almost spent itself. We who have enjoyed good health and a small share of the blessings of everyday life in America, even when business is bad and collections poor, have much for which we should be thankful. One of the things of which the faculty of the College is proud and for which it is thankful is its loyal group of alumni. We wish to maintain our contacts with you, and it is toward this end that the annual letter is written. We hope that as often as opportunity will permit you will come back to visit your *Alma Mater* to live again your college days and to share with us the experiences that have been yours so that we, profiting by them, may be better able to prepare the boys who are now making ready to take up the work when you and I must leave it.

Last June the second largest graduating class (55) that ever left our doors went forth to apply the knowledge that we have helped them to absorb. They were a fine group, and better prepared for their work than any of the classes that preceded them. In spite of the rather large number, all but a handful had jobs by the time they were qualified to accept them, and I believe that every man is now employed. Many of you, no doubt, have seen the write-up of Engueda (Joe) Yohannes in the "Cornell Alumni News." Joe, a native Ethiopian, was one of the most popular members of the class. Immediately after graduating he sailed for Europe on his way home. He was last heard from at Djibouti, French Somaliland. Many of his

friends in Ithaca are anxiously awaiting further word from him. Doubtless he is in military service for his country.

The class of 1935 was the last to be admitted under the old admission requirements. Every student in the College now has had at least one year of general college work and nearly half have had more than this minimum. The student body now numbers 129, with about thirty-five in each of the lower classes and twenty-six in the Senior class. Under the present policy of limiting admissions, the number of students will not be permitted to rise above one hundred forty or one hundred fifty. This spring and summer the Committee on Admissions faced an extremely difficult and often unpleasant task in eliminating from the one hundred sixty-six applicants for admission to the freshman class all but the thirty-eight that were finally permitted to register. The Committee undoubtedly made mistakes; nevertheless we feel sure that the majority of those admitted will eventually make high grade veterinarians.

We are trying something new in the teaching plan this year. For a long time it has been felt that the preclinical and the clinical work had too broad a gap between them; that the application of fundamental laboratory examinations to the clinical work was not being sufficiently emphasized. To aid in correcting this situation, a new course running thruout the Senior year was inaugurated. The Senior students are separated into small groups and these rotate thru the various laboratories during the year in assignments of about one month each. While one group is doing blood and urine chemistry, another is engaged in bacteriological work, another in clinical pathology, another in parasitological examinations, and so forth, each group drawing their material from patients in the several clinics. It is possible, in this way, to have routine examinations made of many patients, often supplying useful information to the clinical staff, and the students are made to see the value of such examinations in practice.

There have been no major changes in the staff of the College during the year. Two instructors, Dr. C. W. Barber in pathology, and Dr. W. F. Witter in poultry diseases (Farmingdale station), resigned and were replaced by Dr. Leonard J. Goss and Dr. Hendrik Versluis, respectively. Drs. Frost and Olafson were on sabbatic leave the second half of last year. They, with their families, spent the

time in travel and study in Europe. Dr. Milks and Professor Asmus have been granted sabbatic leaves for the second term of this year. Our Emeritus Professors Gage, Williams, and Hopkins are working diligently and looking as young and vigorous as they did twenty years ago. Dr. Gibbons came close to killing himself last winter in an automobile accident; for the rest of us life has been busy but uneventful.

During recent years the College has been facing increasing pressure to inaugurate an extension program on animal diseases. I have long been of the opinion that there would be value in a properly controlled program of this sort not only to livestock owners of the State but to the profession as well. The veterinary profession needs more publicity. In an extension program I can see the possibility of a desirable kind of publicity, and an opportunity for the College to bring home to livestock owners the value of the services of good veterinarians. On the other side of the matter, there can be no doubt that a great deal of good can be accomplished by bringing to the livestock owners of the State the kind of information that health agencies are bringing to the public regarding human health. The standard of education among farmers is rapidly rising. Many of the better farmers have had college training and their sons and daughters are attending college. Such people demand, and intend to have, more information about the nature of diseases of animals, of the ways these are spread, and of the measures that they may take to protect their property against losses from disease. If the veterinary colleges do not supply this information, they will seek it elsewhere to the detriment both of themselves and of the profession. At the last meeting of the New York State Farm Bureau Federation, I presented a paper in which it was stated that the Veterinary College will be willing to sponsor an extension program as soon as financial support for it can be obtained. So that there might be no misunderstanding about our attitude in the matter, it was pointed out that it was not our intention, when conducting this work, to undertake to treat diseases, or to try to teach farmers how to do so, since such a policy would inevitably tend to break down the system of private practice and lower the standards of veterinary service in the State. The College has been charged with having a greater interest in the welfare of its graduates than in that of the livestock industry of the State. I deny that there is

any foundation for this charge. In this instance it happens that the best interests of the livestock industry lie in protecting the standards of veterinary practice; hence we are protecting the one while we are doing what we can to protect the other. Practicing veterinarians should bear in mind, however, that they are deserving of protection only so long as they "play the game." They must keep abreast of progress in their profession and develop a public spiritedness that will always keep them aware of the fact that they have responsibilities in their communities above those of mere money making.

The Conference will be held as usual in January—on the 9th and 10th. We think we have a good program outlined, one that will be interesting and helpful to practitioners. Last year we had a registration of over three hundred. We are expecting as many again this year. Alumni who live at a distance will find no better time to hold a reunion with their classmates than this. Programs will not be sent to the more distant alumni. We will be glad, however, to add to our mailing list the names of any of these who would like to have them.

Since my last alumni letter was written four of the group have departed from our midst. These are: George Schwamm, Jr., '21, on December 13, 1934; Walter G. Morehouse, '07, on March 2, 1935; William E. Muldoon, '13, on May 12, 1935; and Major James L. Barringer, '16, on August 10, 1935. We honor the memory of these men and our sympathy goes out to their families.

On behalf of the faculty I present its best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a New Year of health, happiness and prosperity. The prosperity that so long has been lurking "just around the corner" is now in plain sight and is rapidly being overtaken. "The world is a looking-glass, and gives back to every man the reflection of his own face. Frown at it, and it in turn will look sourly upon you; laugh at it and with it, and it is a jolly, kind companion." Let us laugh at and with the brand new year that soon will be with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. W. Wagon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.