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BAKER INSTITUTE *for* ANIMAL HEALTH

Dedicated to the study of veterinary infectious diseases, immunology, genetics, and reproduction.



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Institute Director Colin Parrish, Ph.D., and his dog, Adelaide.

News: Parrish organizes workshop on epidemic viruses

August 3, 2015

Pandemic Influenza, West Nile virus in the USA, Severe Acute Respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), Ebola virus. These are just a few of the viral diseases that have passed from animals to humans to cause epidemics without any warning. [Dr. Colin Parrish](#) studies of animal viruses at the Baker Institute address these topics involving viruses of animals, and

now he coordinated a workshop on the emergence of new epidemic viruses in Rockville, MD, August 3-5, 2015. The meeting was supported by the [National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) of the [NIH](#), as well as by the Baker Institute for Animal Health.

Currently there is no way to anticipate the types of epidemics or pandemics in humans, and methods for prediction and control are only rudimentary. It is clear that new approaches involving collaboration and cooperation among scientists and public health officials are required to give us a fighting chance of anticipating such emerging viruses. The workshop helped scientists from the fields of virology, public health, technology development, and medicine evaluate progress in understanding how viruses move between different species and emerge to cause large-scale outbreaks that threaten human and animal lives. Over the course of two and a half days, 25 scientists discussed the possible sources of "new" viruses, the hosts that the viruses prefer and why, the ways in which viruses can transfer to and adapt to new hosts, how viruses evolve, and ways of controlling epidemics. Another 30 or more participants representing government bodies, including NIH, the [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency \(DARPA\)](#), and the White House, also attended the workshop to learn how the different sponsored research efforts may be able to be improved to be more effective in the future.