



Baker Institute for Animal Health

DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF VETERINARY INFECTIOUS DISEASES, IMMUNOLOGY, GENETICS, AND REPRODUCTION

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Baker researcher receives lifetime achievement award in equine reproduction

In recognition of his discoveries in equine pregnancy over 40-years, the Baker Institute's [Professor Doug Antczak](#) has been presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the organizers of the International Symposium on Equine Reproduction (ISER).

Dr. Antczak was nominated by [Dr. Mandi de Mestre](#), a faculty member of England's Royal Veterinary College who also serves on the ISER organizing committee. When she first met Dr. Antczak as a veterinary student and summer intern in his lab, she was immediately impressed by his passion for pushing the boundaries of science.

"Over the ensuing 20 years since we first met, his energy and commitment to equine placenta research and generosity of spirit have not changed," said Dr. de Mestre. "Doug remains an incredibly modest and supportive colleague who continues to work with supreme energy promoting equine reproductive research both within and outside our field."

Dr. Antczak's research has extended our understanding of how the mother's immune system recognizes and responds to pregnancy, and the role of the placenta in protecting an embryo from potentially lethal maternal immune responses. He has lead pioneering studies of the molecular mechanisms governing equine placental development and developed new methods for determining how the cells of the placenta communicate with the mother to ensure that the fetus receives proper nutrition and support during pregnancy. Dr. Antczak's research on equine pregnancy was funded almost continuously by the NIH for 30-years because of its value to human reproduction.

"Dr. Antczak is a giant in the field of equine reproductive immunology," says Dr. Soon Hon Cheong, assistant professor of reproductive medicine at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. "His scientific contributions have shaped our understanding of how the maternal immune system recognizes the fetus in horses. He is also a respected colleague who has mentored many young faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine who have gone on to become highly successful tenured professors. Dr. Antczak is a worthy recipient of this inaugural lifetime achievement award."

"Receiving this award has been very humbling," said Dr. Antczak, the Dorothy Havemeyer McConville Professor of Equine Medicine. "This is not an achievement I could have made on my own. Here at the Baker Institute I have had the opportunity to develop a complex, sustainable program that has allowed my research group to study complex problems over a long period of time. It has been my great good fortune to have worked with exceptional people throughout my career – very talented and dedicated staff at the Institute, highly motivated students and trainees, and wonderful colleagues at Cornell and from around the world. The unique herd of research horses that we have selectively bred for immune system genes has also been essential to our success. The very strong scientific environment at the Baker Institute has been instrumental to our progress."

This is the first year that ISER has made these awards. "The Lifetime Achievement Award in Equine Reproduction was established in 2017 to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the discipline of equine reproduction, either through research or clinical practice," wrote Barry Ball, a professor at the University of Kentucky, and chair of the ISER Committee, in the announcement.

Antczak is one of five individuals who received the award this year at the Twelfth International Symposium on Equine Reproduction, held July 22-27 in Cambridge, UK.

The Equine Reproduction Award makes a hat trick for Dr. Antczak, who was also the recipient of the international Distinguished Veterinary Immunologist Award in 2010 and inducted into the Equine Research Hall of Fame in 2009. In addition to his scientific studies, Dr. Antczak also served as Baker Institute Director from 1994 until 2009.
