

Veterinary

VIEWPOINTS

Number 1, 1992

Seminars To Help Students Prepare for Careers

A new Practitioner Seminar Series is helping students get a head start on their careers by providing advice on starting salaries, balancing work and family life, paying off student loans, and other topics.



DAN CLARK/ION REIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Sponsored by the college's Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA), the series began last semester and has presented two seminars thus far. It is funded by the Alumni Unrestricted Gift Program, which provides money for speakers' travel expenses, lodging, honoraria, and seminar dinners and receptions. According to Laura Eirmann '93, SCAVMA's president during 1991, the series was designed to provide students with information they'll need when starting their careers.

"We realized that, although students graduate with huge amounts of

medical knowledge, many of us don't have the financial and interpersonal skills we will need when entering the job market," Eirmann says. "Also, most students are so wrapped up in their veterinary studies they don't keep up with their interests outside school."

The program was conceived by Dr. Donald Smith, associate dean for veterinary education, and organized by Eirmann and Dr. Thomas Divers, associate professor of veterinary medicine. Divers is faculty adviser for the program.

"Dr. Smith suggested that we start a program that covered topics that aren't currently in the curriculum,"

says Eirmann. "Dr. Divers and I came up with a concept, wrote a budget, and then looked for funding. The college's Office of Public Affairs put us in touch with practitioners and alumni who were potential speakers."

The first seminar, "How To Balance Career and Family Pressures," was held last fall and attracted 50 students. Visiting speakers were Joan (DVM '84) and Gerry Kolb, DVM '84 and Paul (DVM '82) and Carolyn Black. The Kolbs and Paul Black are in private practice. Carolyn Black is a registered nurse. All four have busy careers and hectic schedules.

During dinner with students and a panel presentation, they discussed juggling work and family responsibilities, making time for each other and for family, and dating and marriage while in school. Carolyn Black gave her perspective on what being married to a vet is like for a nonveterinarian.

The second seminar, "How Much Money Do I Need To Make When I Graduate?" was held in January and featured David Gallagher, who conducts the college's practice management course. Gallagher led a two-hour discussion on determining salary requirements based on personal needs and educational debt, techniques for interviewing, and the balance between salary and benefits. He also reviewed starting salaries of recent graduates.

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Dr. Jay Harvey, head of the college's Small Animal Clinic, leads a three-hour session on gastrointestinal surgery techniques.



Hands-on experience, like this lab session on the latest in endoscopic procedures, is a growing trend in continuing education.



Conferees get an introduction to using computers for monitoring dairy herd performance.

Report from the Annual Conference

The 84th Annual Conference for Veterinarians was held at the college January 7-9. Attending were 290 veterinarians from across the Northeast who participated in the many lectures and laboratory sessions. Their schedule also allowed plenty of time for fun with a dinner dance, the alumni luncheon, and several sporting events. **W**

Volunteers Make Campaign Work

More than 130 dedicated alumni volunteers are working across New York State to make the Cornell Campaign for the College of Veterinary Medicine a success.

A regional network of volunteers is playing a vital role in the campaign, which is now in its second year. The network grew out of a plan developed by Campaign Committee members, 15 of the college's most devoted volunteers. The Veterinary College Campaign is co-chaired by Dr. Robert Clark '52 and Dr. Jay Geasling '75.

Ten regional committees were formed in the fall throughout New York. These network volunteers are now hard at work contacting fellow alumni to encourage both annual giving and special campaign commitments.

New endowed professorships and DVM scholarship funds are the top priorities of this major fund-raising effort. As of the end of December 1991, the college had achieved 36 percent of its goal of \$30 million. Gifts counted toward the college total to date include all 1990-91 gifts from alumni, friends, and other sources, several large bequests received from friends, and the value of a number of planned gifts. University-wide, Cornell has achieved 48 percent of its \$1.25 billion goal.

Next year, the regional network will be expanded to other states in the Northeast and Florida.

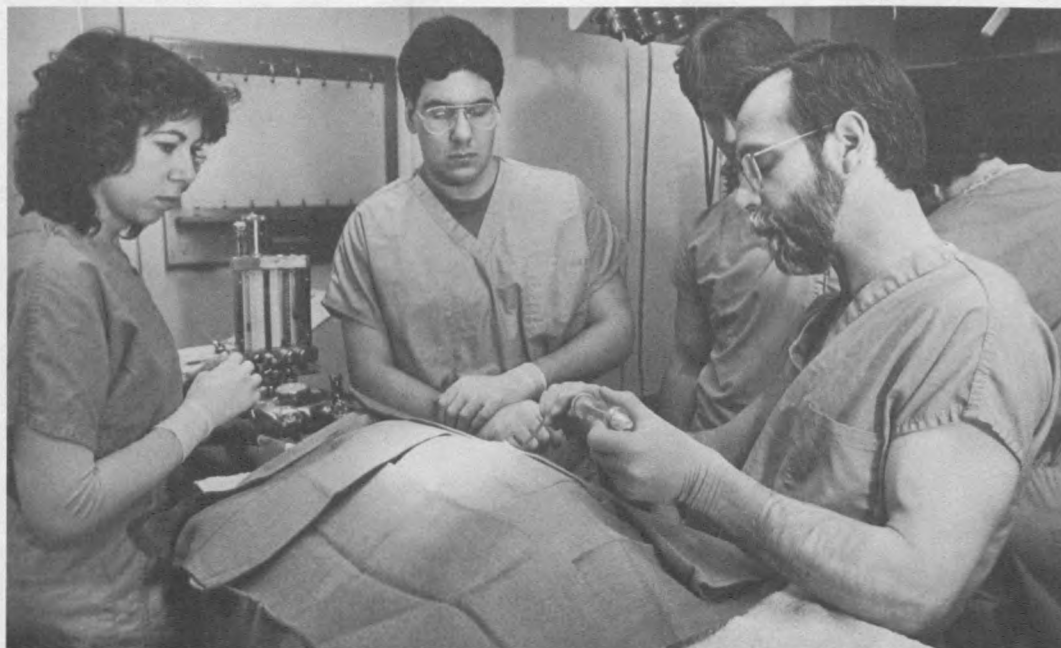
*For more information about the Veterinary College Campaign and gift opportunities please contact the Office of Public Affairs, 607-253-3744. **W***

Outstanding Gifts

In the ongoing Cornell Campaign for the College of Veterinary Medicine, the college has recently received two extremely generous gifts.

As a result of a magnificent gift commitment of over \$2 million made by Dr. Rudolph Steffen, DVM '34 and his late wife, Katharine, the college will establish the Rudolph and Katharine Steffen Professorship in Clinical Medicine.

On the occasion of his 60th reunion in the summer of 1991, Dr. William Jennings, DVM '31, along with his wife Inge, established a life income trust agreement with Cornell of over \$100,000 for the benefit of the college. **W**



Practitioner Seminar Series *continued*

"Vet students are so used to living in poverty-stricken conditions that figuring out what to ask for as a starting salary has been one of their hardest decisions," says Eirmann.

"Everyone's financial situation is so different. This seminar was really helpful in giving us a method of figuring out how much we need."

The next seminar, tentatively scheduled for April, will be on "The

Animal-and-Human Bond" and the special veterinary needs of service animals such as seeing-eye dogs. Other topics Eirmann hopes to see covered in future seminars include substance abuse, changing career paths, and developing interests outside veterinary medicine. **W**

How Are They Working?

Veterinary Viewpoints asked Laura Eirmann '93 to assess the success of the Practitioner Seminar Series.

Q. Now that the Practitioner series is underway, what aspects of the program have students found to be most valuable?

A. I think the most valuable service the program has provided is setting up a forum where students can bring up things they've been thinking about but haven't had the opportunity to discuss. Everyone is so busy with day-to-day activities that questions like "How am I going to pay for my loan?" or "What kind of a salary do I need to make?" aren't adequately addressed.

Students also worry about having relationships with people outside the profession. They wonder how, when they're so busy, are they going to have time for friendships, marriage, or children.

Q. So the seminars let students look at life beyond school in a practical way.

A. Right. By talking to people who are already in a practice and have managed to balance finances, work, and family life, we can learn from their experiences. It also gives us exposure to veterinarians who work outside the academic environment.

Q. Have the speakers enjoyed the programs?

A. The response has been very favorable. They've enjoyed coming back to Cornell and seeing their old professors and all the changes in the college. One couple wrote back and said they'd had such a good time they really didn't think it was fair for them to accept the honorarium, so they decided to donate it to the college for student use!

Q. Have students asked to have particular topics covered in the seminars?

A. Yes. Vet students are not shy. They're quite vocal and let you know what they want. When we started planning programs, seniors who had not yet had Practice Management asked for seminars on finances and managing work and personal lives. They really needed that information to get started in their careers. We actually had so many suggestions that Dr. Smith and I weeded them down to get a working list for the first year or so. There's no end to the topics that could be covered. **W**

Raccoon Rabies Vaccination Program Underway

The rapid spread of rabies throughout New York State and the Northeast poses a serious health threat to both humans and animals. The disease, travelling northward approximately 25-30 miles each year, has reached the southern tier of counties in New York, some counties along the Hudson River, and into Connecticut. It is moving particularly quickly through the raccoon population.

To contain the spread of the disease, the College of Veterinary Medicine has begun a project that will employ and study several methods of immunizing raccoons.

Dr. Donald H. Lein, director of the college's Diagnostic Laboratory, is leading the program with the collaboration of the New York State departments of Public Health, Environmental Conservation, and Agriculture and Markets, and the New York State Veterinary Medical Society. The initial phase of the project will be carried out in the Ithaca area.

"We're conducting the program around Ithaca because at this point it is the leading edge of the rabies spread," says Lein.

The first phase of the study, which will administer a vaccine via injection to raccoons trapped in the Ithaca area, will probably begin in early spring when the raccoons become active again. Meanwhile, researchers are conducting a surveillance project to chart the distribution of rabies as it approaches Ithaca. Based on a 1986-87 wildlife census, there are an estimated 1,000 raccoons in Ithaca.

"We're working with the police, the Public Works Department, nuisance trappers, and the S.P.C.A. to gather animals that have been killed by vehicles, or animals that have been killed because they were sick," says Dr. Susan Stehman, coordinator of the project. "The animals are then tested for the virus to give us some idea of where the disease has spread. We're also asking Ithaca homeowners to report raccoon activity, and requesting permission to install traps on private property."

When trapping begins, the raccoons will be immunized with a "killed-virus" type of vaccine that will protect them from one to two years; the same vaccine used to immunize dogs, cats, and other domestic animals. Once vaccinated, raccoons will be tagged and released where they were trapped.

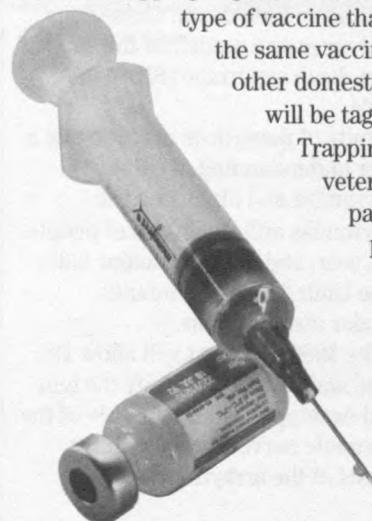
Trapping and vaccinating will be done by veterinarians from the college. Everyone participating in the study has been given prophylactic immunization against the virus and tested for a response to the vaccine.

In addition to the injected vaccine, Lein and Stehman hope

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SOL GOLDBERG





BRUCE WANG

Raccoon Rabies Vaccination, *continued*

to try a second method—the distribution of a baited oral vaccine. This involves putting a wax ampule containing a recombinant DNA vaccine virus inside a flavored bait that raccoons will eat. The vaccine carries a noninfectious portion of the rabies virus. To prevent humans and other wildlife species from contacting the vaccine, the bait is put inside a foul-scented resealable plastic food storage bag easily opened by raccoons. The bags would be distributed in areas with large raccoon populations.

“Right now, we’re waiting to get approval from the appropriate agencies, including the federal government, to use the vaccine on a trial basis,” says Stehman. “It has never been tested in a populated area before, so field trials need to be completed before we can begin. Ontario has been using a baited oral vaccine program for foxes for about four years now. Preliminary results suggest that it has been very effective.”

Under this program, researchers will evaluate the two methods. If one or both are effective, they could be used to treat endemic areas throughout New York and other northeastern states. The possibility of a coordinated oral bait rabies vaccination program for the northeastern states and Canada has already been discussed by various agencies. Oral bait immunization could also be used to protect wildlife against other infectious diseases such as distemper, or to distribute oral contraceptives to control the size of wildlife populations. **W**

NIH Grant Awarded for Study of Sudden Death

The National Institutes of Health has awarded a nearly \$1 million, five-year grant to a project based on the collaboration between a clinical scientist and a basic scientist.

Dr. N. Sydney Moise, associate professor of medicine, is the principal investigator in a study entitled ‘Sudden Death of Young Dogs with Ventricular Arrhythmias.’ She and co-researcher Dr. Robert F. Gilmour, Jr., associate professor of physiology, will study a colony of German Shepherd dogs with an inherited syndrome characterized by ventricular arrhythmias and sudden death. These dogs could serve as a model for the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in people.

Study of these dogs may provide a better understanding of cardiac arrhythmias and SIDS. Cardiac arrhythmias afflict millions of people each year, and SIDS is a major killer in the United States of infants younger than one year.

The \$966,350 grant will allow Drs. Moise and Gilmour to study the temporal development and the role of the autonomic nervous system in the genesis of the arrhythmia.

Dr. Moise emphasized that an interdisciplinary approach is critical to the success of this research. “The collaboration of clinical sciences and basic physiology adds further dimension to our investigation. As well, this linkage strengthens our other academic duties such as teaching. Seed money provided through the college’s Cooperative Research Initiative in Clinical Sciences allowed us to get the preliminary data to make our grant application successful.” **W**



CHRIS HILDRETH

Year-round Clinical Rotations Begin in May

In response to academic and budgetary concerns, seniors will be allowed to acquire their required clinical credits over the full calendar year beginning in May. Currently, students have access to clinical experience only during the academic year. According to Dr. Donald F. Smith, associate dean for veterinary education, the new plan will give students more freedom in planning their final year at the college. It also will provide the veterinary hospital with year-round staffing by senior students, reducing the need

for summer and holiday hiring.

"We're also one of the few veterinary colleges that doesn't have clinics accessible to students for credit on a year-round basis," he notes. "So, for all these reasons, we decided this past year to institute a program whereby students could gain academic credit for hospital experience throughout the entire 12 months. At the same time, the faculty increased the required number of clinical credits from 32 to 36."

Currently, seniors must earn 28 credits of clinical experience at the

college and up to a maximum of 4 credits of "selectives." These can be extra rotations in the hospital or approved external rotations in another veterinary school, a private practice, or some other clinical situation. Until now, they started their rotations at the end of August and continued through May. In addition to their 32 weeks of clinical study, they would have 4 weeks without clinics, 4 weeks of holidays, and 12 weeks for employment over the summer.

Beginning in May, students will be able to select from 24 blocks of time throughout the year to accrue the new requirement of 32 hospital credits and four "selective" credits.

"The hospital will now be open to students 12 months a year," says Smith. "They can choose, within the limits imposed by staffing the hospital, the times when they want to be in the hospital and when they want to schedule their 12 weeks of free time. Those weeks can be split up during other times of the year rather than just the summer. This allows students to take advantage of the caseload during the summer, when many hospital services are busiest."

One benefit of the new system is that students will be free to seek temporary employment with private practices throughout the year. "That can open up seasonal experiences to them that are not available during the summer," says Smith. "One example would be working at a horse breeding unit, where the breeding season runs from January to June."

Smith noted another advantage is that students may choose to do all their rotations in succession, beginning in May. This would allow them to enter the job market in February rather than in June. **w**



DAVID GRUNFELD

Students examine one of the nearly 12,000 patients that visit the Small Animal Clinic each year.

First Hyman Wildlife Medicine Appointment

The college's first Jay Hyman Professor of Wildlife Medicine, Dr. George V. Kollias, joins the faculty in February. He will develop and lead a comprehensive program, with a special focus on avian species. Dr. Kollias also will interact with the Natural Resources department and other related units on campus.

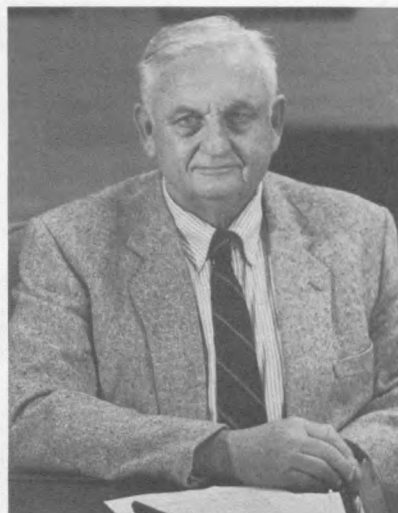
Kollias' appointment is a major advance for wildlife and avian medicine at Cornell. The distinguished chair was endowed by Dr. Jay Hyman, DVM '57, a long-time advocate of wildlife and marine animals. Internationally regarded, Dr. Kollias received his DVM from the University of Missouri and completed his residency at the University of California-Davis. He was previously on the University of Florida faculty. **vv**

PEOPLE

Notes



CHRIS HILDRETH



CHARLES HARRINGTON

Carmichael Is Director of Baker Institute

Dr. Leland E. Carmichael, an international authority on canine infectious diseases, has been appointed director of the James A. Baker Institute for Animal Health. Dr. Carmichael assumed his new responsibility at the Institute's Advisory Council annual meeting in September 1991.

Since joining the college's faculty in 1959, Dr. Carmichael has had a distinguished career, becoming a world-renowned leader in understanding and preventing a wide range of bacterial and viral diseases, especially those affecting dogs. He and his colleagues developed the first attenuated live canine parvovirus vaccine; 11 years later it remains the dominant vaccine used worldwide.

Dr. Carmichael, who succeeds Dr. Douglas D. McGregor, previously demonstrated his leadership ability in the post when he was the institute's acting director following James Baker's death in 1975. **vv**



BIOMEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Poppensiek Honored

Dr. George C. Poppensiek, former dean of the college, has been named the newest Distinguished Life Member of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society. This special category of membership is bestowed on those who have made significant contributions to veterinary medicine and to the society.

Dr. Poppensiek served as dean for 15 years, then was the James Law Professor of Comparative Medicine until his retirement in 1988. His career is highlighted with numerous prestigious awards and appointments, among them presidency of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, New York State Veterinarian of the Year in 1974, and the XII International Veterinary Congress Award.

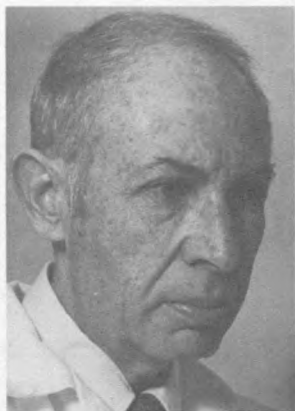
Dr. Poppensiek said this latest honor puts a "gold capstone" on his career. **vv**

NYSVMS Honors Alumni

The New York State Veterinary Medical Society honored a number of alumni at its annual meeting last fall.

Congratulations to:

- Dr. Robert V. Manning, DVM '55 — Distinguished Life Service Award,
- Dr. Robert W. Kirk, DVM '46 — Outstanding Service to Veterinary Medicine Award,
- Dr. Richard E. Thoma, DVM '65 — Outstanding Service to Veterinary Medicine Award,
- Dr. Christian J. Haller, DVM '42 — Merit Award,
- Dr. Paul A. Peterson, DVM '59 — Merit Award, and
- Dr. Joseph B. Bruzgul, Jr., DVM '75 — President-Elect, 1992. **vv**



SOL GOLDBERG

New James Law Professors

The Cornell Board of Trustees has named two faculty members to James Law Professorships. Dr. Alexander de Lahunta is the James Law Professor of Veterinary Anatomy; Dr. Alexander J. Winter is the James Law Professor of Veterinary Microbiology.

In announcing their appointments, Dean Robert Phemister said de Lahunta and Winter have brought great credit to the college and have contributed in important ways to its ongoing academic programs and distinction. Both will give public lectures during the spring term. **W**

Winter



BIOMEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS

de Lahunta

Alums Active in AVMA Responsibilities

In Washington

Two college alumni are now in Washington, D.C., serving with the American Veterinary Medicine Association's Governmental Relations Division. Dr. Malcolm Kram, DVM '74 has joined the GRD staff as a full-time policy specialist. The former AVMA Congressional Fellow will focus on animal drug and food safety issues.

Dr. Ed Rhode, DVM '47 is concluding his tour of duty in February as a staff volunteer in the GRD office. Since stepping down as dean of veterinary medicine at the University of California-Davis, Rhode has devoted his efforts to research funding issues.

On AVMA Executive Board

Dr. Harold Zweighaft, DVM '56 is a newly elected member of the AVMA Executive Board, where he will represent New York State and District 1. The New York State Veterinary Medical Society elected Dr. Zweighaft a delegate to the AVMA, a position he's held since 1979.

Grambow Elected to Council

The AVMA House of Delegates has elected Dr. Richard Grambow, DVM '57 to the Council on Veterinary Services.

Dr. Grambow, a small animal practitioner in central New York, is well-known for his active participation in organized veterinary medicine. Chairman of the Advisory Council of the college, Dr. Grambow is also president of the Eastern States North American Veterinary Conference and a past president of the NYSVMS. **W**

Diagnostic Consultant to Feline Health Center



BIOMEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS

FHC's new diagnostic consultant and the most current feline health information are only a phone call away.

Dr. James Richards is the new diagnostic consultant and assistant director of the Feline Health Center. Since coming to the college in September 1991, Dr. Richards has spent much of his time on the phone.

A new 800 telephone number (1-800-KITTY-DR) lets cat owners and veterinarians speak directly with Dr. Richards to receive the most current scientific information concerning cats and their health through the *Dr. Louis J. Camuti Memorial Feline Consultation and Diagnostic Service*. He provides unbiased, reliable advice on cat diseases and health care. "Because new information regarding the diagnosis and proper management of feline diseases is expanding very rapidly, it can be difficult for practitioners to keep ahead of all recent developments. The consultation service attempts to make this information available in a very quick, efficient, and accessible manner," said Dr. Richards.

Dr. Richards comes to Cornell from Ohio where he was in a general small animal practice and heavily involved in emergency and critical care of small animals. He received his degree in veterinary medicine from Ohio State University in 1979.

The hours of operation for the telephone consultation service are 9AM to 12 noon and 2PM-4PM (EST), Monday through Friday. A \$25 fee for the consultation helps the center defray the cost of this service. **W**

Senior Enters Select Group

A Cornell veterinary college senior is one of just six winners throughout the United States and Canada to win the 1992 American Association of Equine Practitioners/American Livestock Insurance Company Scholarship.

Michael Ball '92 will receive \$1,500 in recognition of his classroom excellence and clinical activities. Now in its third year, the award goes to outstanding students who are planning a career in private equine practice. The winners are chosen from candidates at all 31 veterinary colleges in the United States and Canada. **W**

Phi Zeta Award to Former College Researcher

A former graduate student at the college, Dr. William Donaldson, has been recognized by the National Society of Phi Zeta, the honor society of veterinary medicine.

One of two recipients of the prestigious award for 1991, Donaldson received the honor for a paper he authored while doing doctoral research at the James A. Baker Institute for Animal Health.

The Phi Zeta awards recognize and promote scholarship and research matters pertaining to the welfare and disease of animals.

Donaldson's research and paper focused on the regulation and expression of major histocompatibility complex antigens by equine trophoblast cells during early pregnancy. He now works at the Merck Sharp & Dohme Research Laboratories. **W**

Progress in FIV, an AIDS-like Virus in Cats



DAVID GRUNFELD

feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). Their work has also shown that the prevalence of the cat version of AIDS is not growing.

Dr. Margaret Barr and Dr. Fred Scott of Cornell's Feline Health Center have isolated a feline immunodeficiency virus from an Asian cat which, unlike most other immunodeficiency viruses, *can* be easily manipulated in the lab. The new isolate from a Pallas cat brings researchers that much closer to creating a vaccine. Because FIV is similar to the virus that causes AIDS in people, this work may help in the fight against the deadly HIV.

As with many researchers studying AIDS, the veterinary virologists have found the vast majority of the FIV viruses very difficult to isolate and grow in the lab. But one isolate from the wild endangered cat from Mongolia is an exception. Barr found that she has been able to characterize the virus, grow it in cell culture, and work with it more easily than any other isolate. "We believe that this virus has the potential for production and testing of vaccines and for anti-

viral drug therapy," says Scott.

Their findings were presented last September at the First International Conference of FIV Researchers.

Scott and Barr, along with veterinary student Richard Reid '92, have also determined that the number of infected cats is not increasing. Only 1 to 2 percent of healthy cats in the United States carry FIV. Chronically ill cats, however, have a higher incidence—about 9 to 12 percent. These rates have held steady for the past seven years.

Evidence of the virus dates back to 1968. "In fact, we now believe that FIV has been well established for a long time, possibly having evolved along with cats themselves," said Barr. She also noted that the disease is being thought of more and more as an animal model for AIDS. Evidently, FIV is spread among cats by saliva through bite wounds. The disease is species-specific; only cats can be infected with FIV.

At highest risk for FIV are outdoor, free-roaming males and cats in multiple-cat households where there

is a constantly changing population, as with the adoption of strays. Barr says the best way to protect domestic cats is to keep them indoors and away from free-roaming cats. **W**

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Veterinary Viewpoints is published three times a year for friends and alumni of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University.

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