

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TO GIVE VETERINARIANS BETTER ANIMAL WELFARE KNOWLEDGE.

Teaching novel approaches to animal welfare

By Lisa Lawlor

With a focus on experiential learning, the University of Calgary is set to produce a new generation of veterinarians well attuned to animal welfare issues.

Prof. Eugene Janzen, associate dean of clinical programs at the University of Calgary, says a unique characteristic of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) will be the placement of fourth-year students in the Distributed Veterinary Learning Community – a network of practicing veterinarians throughout the province.



Dr. Eugene Janzen

Janzen is hopeful this experiential learning environment will give students a heightened sensitivity to animal welfare and teach a new generation of veterinarians the importance of their position in the sector.

“The role of the veterinarians in animal agriculture has already begun to change,” says Janzen. “Veterinarians are now creating,

delivering and monitoring protocols for sound welfare management in intensive agriculture operations. The humane management of animal production in intensive agricultural systems has become one of the deliverables of a veterinarian's food-animal practice.”

To ensure new veterinarians can provide these deliverables, the UCVM will give them the tools to assess animal health and well being. To this end, the UCVM will incorporate animal welfare into all courses, ensuring a holistic approach

to animal health that will complement students' out-of-classroom learning.

“The UCVM has created several courses in the curriculum that specifically address animal handling, animal well being and behavioral observation as an assessment tool,” says Janzen.

For example, an animal behaviour course will be offered to every student in the first semester of study, introducing students to behaviour as the first indicator of animal welfare. A second semester course focused on the introduction to animal industries will give students perspective on some of the welfare issues that emerge, including safe transportation practices.

The UCVM has already recruited 35 professors. Among the faculty are researchers who specialize in clinical studies, both individual and population medicine, with interest in pain control and anesthesia.

This September, the veterinary school's first class of DVM students will enter the program, taking its place among Canada's other veterinary schools in Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

The UCVM school is funded by the government of Alberta. ⁱ



UCVM graduate students conducting research in the field



New Clinical Skills Building (under construction)

Putting Farm Animal Welfare on the Agenda.

Public concern and interest in farm animal welfare continue to grow. There is some excellent work being done to improve farm animal care. Our challenge is to communicate that information to where it's needed, from farmers to consumers and everyone in between.

This publication is part of the new *Putting Farm Animal Welfare on the Agenda* project — a team effort to increase communications about farm animal welfare across the country. Funding for this project was provided in part through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program. This is a collective outcome partnership with the Agricultural Adaptation Council in Ontario, the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development and the Alberta Agriculture and Food.