

vetNEWS

Spring 2013

Veterinarian Founded, Veterinary Focused



“It is through our veterinary partners that Morris Animal Foundation implements the science-based changes that improve animal health.”

WINONA BURGESS, DVM, CPA, MBA
Director, Scientific Communications and Veterinary Outreach



Morris Animal
FOUNDATION
Celebrating 65 years

OUR MISSION

Morris Animal Foundation improves the health and well-being of companion animals and wildlife by funding humane health studies and disseminating information about these studies.

Dear Fellow Veterinarians,

When Dr. Mark Morris Sr. opened the first veterinary practice exclusively for companion animals in 1928, he did so with the understanding that applying scientific methods to diagnose and treat patients produced better results for pets and their owners. This philosophy of using science-based solutions to improve animal health contributed enormously to the success of his business—and to advancing veterinary care. At Morris Animal Foundation, we continue to support Dr. Morris’s vision by investing on a global scale in the best science to advance veterinary medicine and further your success as a practitioner. As Dr. Morris recognized, research that impacts your practice results in healthy patients and happy, loyal pet owners.

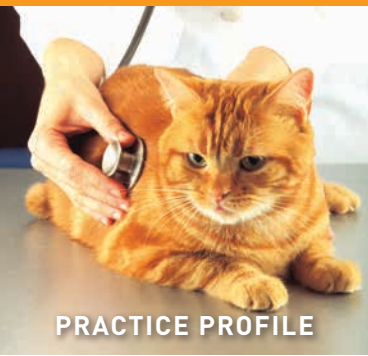
In this issue, we introduce you to a new program that helps you honor outstanding pet owners who take extra steps in their pet’s wellness care. Morris Animal Foundation’s Pet Parent Awards offer a new way to engage pet owners with a personalized card from the Foundation informing them of your gift of recognition. Participation in the program not only helps fund veterinary research advances but it also helps your clients to feel good about their efforts on behalf of their pet’s care. In turn, this reinforces the positive veterinary clinic experience you provide.

In this issue, we also update you on a new drug that may help to better manage epilepsy in dogs and a promising treatment for cats with inflammatory bowel disease. Morris Animal Foundation has also partnered with the American Animal Hospital Association to co-fund a systematic review of treatment options for cranial cruciate ligament disease in dogs, which should help identify best practices for the veterinary community.

At Morris Animal Foundation, we will continue our work of funding the best research to find cures, preventions and better treatments for the animals in your care.

Your success is our success,

Winona Burgess, DVM, CPA, MBA
Director, Scientific Communications and Veterinary Outreach



PRACTICE PROFILE



Morris Animal
FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE TEAM

DAVID HAWORTH, DVM,
PhD, President/CEO

WAYNE JENSEN, DVM,
PhD, MBA, Chief Scientific Officer

DAN REED, Executive
Development Officer

JOHN TAYLOR, Chief
Operating Officer

**VETERINARY
OUTREACH AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

WINONA L. BURGESS,
DVM, CPA, MBA
Director of Scientific Communications & Veterinary Outreach

THOMAS STEVENS,
Senior Specialist,
Veterinary Outreach

ALLEN BYRNE,
Specialist, Scientific Communications & Veterinary Outreach

JEAN VORE,
Specialist, Scientific Communications

Clients honor cancer group's outstanding work

By THOMAS STEVENS



During my first visit to the Veterinary Cancer Group's Los Angeles clinic, it was immediately apparent why two of the group's veterinarians had recently received Morris Animal Foundation Awards of Excellence from their clients.

Practice manager Ethel Pawlak gave me a tour of the hospital, and I met with several doctors at the practice, including owner/CEO and chief of staff Mona Rosenberg, DVM, DACVIM (oncology). Impressive, well-organized, friendly and professional are just a few words to describe the Veterinary Cancer Group's flagship location. Started in 1992, the group has grown to four practices and is now one of the largest, most comprehensive and most sophisticated veterinary oncology practices in the country.

The hospital staff made me feel welcome, and they also made a point to emphasize how proud they are to be recognized by their clients.

"Recognition of the veterinary staff's dedication to their patients' and clients' medical and emotional needs through the Foundation's Award of Excellence is truly outstanding," Dr. Rosenberg says.

Through Morris Animal Foundation's Award of Excellence Program, a client makes a donation

to the Foundation and we then recognize the veterinarian on the client's behalf. This unique program encourages clients to show how much they appreciate the care their veterinarians have given to their pets.

During tough economic times, it says a lot when a client is so appreciative of a veterinarian's work that he or she takes the time and money to recognize it. Even more impressive is that not one, but two, board-certified veterinary oncologists from the same practice have been recognized for outstanding work: Mary Davis, DVM, DACVIM, and Birgitte Tan-Coleman, DVM, DACVIM.

The client who recognized Dr. Davis made a generous donation to Morris Animal Foundation because she felt that her pet received amazing care and that Dr. Davis went above and beyond to help care for her dog as it battled cancer. Dr. Tan-Coleman's client echoed these sentiments, stating "Dr. Birgitte Tan-Coleman was incredible and thoughtful of our every need."

"I am so proud of both Dr. Davis and Dr. Tan-Coleman!" Dr. Rosenberg says.

We at Morris Animal Foundation are too, and we're also pleased to help clients recognize excellence in veterinary medicine. 🗨️



MARY DAVIS,
DVM, DACVIM



MONA ROSENBERG,
DVM, DACVIM



BIRGITTE TAN-COLEMAN,
DVM, DACVIM

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Award of Excellence Program, visit the "Ways to Donate" section of our website, www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org, and click "Memorial and Honor Gifts."

vetNEWS

Spring 2013

vetNEWS is published four times per year by Morris Animal Foundation.

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Masthead photo courtesy of Thomas Stevens

Pet Parent Awards: Recognizing excellence in pet care

By ALLEN BYRNE

As a veterinarian, you likely have many conversations with pet owners that focus on the health risks and dangers pets face if they don't receive vaccinations, yearly exams or medications. Wouldn't it be nice to recognize outstanding pet parents who take extra steps in their pets' wellness care?

Practice owner Tracey Jensen, DVM, DABVP (canine/feline), of Wellington Veterinary Clinic in Colorado, notes that "historically owners brought their pets to the veterinarian for immunizations. This action made clients feel good because they were doing the responsible thing. With increased vaccine intervals and an emphasis on treating health problems, such as dental disease and obesity, owners now frequently leave the clinic feeling they have failed because the veterinarian found something 'wrong' with their pet."

As it is human nature to avoid actions that leave us feeling like we've failed, emphasizing the negative isn't likely to increase veterinary visits. Offering positive reinforcement can.

Morris Animal Foundation's new Pet Parent Awards do just that. They shift the conversation from concern for the well-being of pets to one of encouragement, promotion and recognition of responsible pet ownership.

The process is simple. When a clinic or veterinarian makes a donation to support advances in veterinary research, Morris Animal Foundation sends a personalized card informing the pet owner that a donation has been made in his or her name. Included in the card is a Morris Animal Foundation "I love my cat" or "I love my dog" sticker for the pet owner's car, computer or refrigerator. By sending a Pet Parent Award, you can acknowledge outstanding pet owners and reward them for participating in preventive health care for their pets.



▲ Veterinarians can choose between a dog or a cat card to send to a client.

"We are using the Pet Parent Award program for all clients who enroll their pets in our preventive health care program. It helps clients feel good about providing great care for their pet," says Dr. Jensen.

As the veterinary community well knows, many pet owners don't realize that their dog or cat has a health problem until a crisis hits. Wellness visits help owners avoid health complications and chronic conditions that can decrease the quality of a pet's life. Positive reinforcement leads to better veterinary care for pets and helps your clinic build customer loyalty and trust—truly a win-win situation. 🐾

To learn more about Morris Animal Foundation card programs and to order Pet Parent Awards, visit www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org/vet-clinics.



TOP 10 VETERINARY PARTNERS FOR 2012

Thank you for participating in our Veterinary Memorial Program.

1. **NORTH PORTLAND VETERINARY HOSPITAL**
Portland, Oregon
2. **CROSSROADS ANIMAL HOSPITAL P.C.**
Londonderry, New Hampshire
3. **INGLESIDE ANIMAL HOSPITAL**
Phoenix, Arizona
4. **SPRING HILL VETERINARY CLINIC**
Spring Hill, Kansas
5. **VCA FIREHOUSE ANIMAL HEALTH CENTER**
Denver, Colorado
6. **TOWN & COUNTRY ANIMAL HOSPITAL**
Normal, Illinois
7. **GAITHERSBURG ANIMAL HOSPITAL**
Gaithersburg, Maryland
8. **NORTH ELM ANIMAL HOSPITAL**
Greensboro, North Carolina
9. **TRIANGLE VETERINARY HOSPITAL**
Durham, North Carolina
10. **NORTHGATE SMALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL**
Collinsville, Illinois



**VETERINARY MEDICINE
& BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Even veterinary research is bigger in Texas

By ALLEN BYRNE

*Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
College of Veterinary Medicine*



About an hour-and-a-half drive northwest from Houston, Texas, sits College Station and Texas A&M University, a university rich with tradition and history, both athletically and academically. The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine also boasts an enduring commitment to animal health research and a long-standing relationship with Morris Animal Foundation.

The first Morris Animal Foundation-funded study at Texas A&M took place in 1956, when researchers examined the relationship between diet and canine skin disorders. Since that time, the Foundation has funded 79 studies at the university's College of Veterinary Medicine, and 13 studies are currently under way.

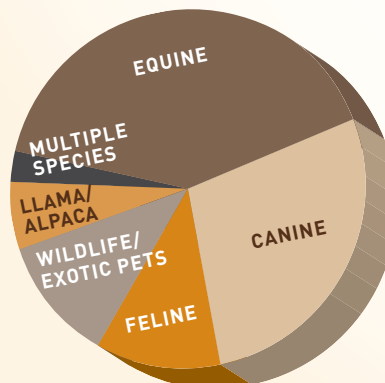
"The relationship has been wonderful for Texas A&M University. Over the years, various clinical researchers, faculty and students have been supported by Morris Animal Foundation, and faculty from Texas A&M University have served as Scientific Advisory Board members," says Noah Cohen, VMD, MPH, PhD, DACVIM, a professor and the associate chair for research and graduate studies in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences. He is also a former member of Morris Animal Foundation's Large Animal Scientific Advisory Board.

From studies of canine behavior to avian nutrition to infectious disease in foals, the work of the university's research team has resulted in significant contributions to animal health.

"Morris Animal Foundation offers valuable support to Texas A&M University by providing funds for research projects that use alternative and innovative techniques to address new angles of animal health research," says Donald Brightsmith, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology.

Texas A&M is particularly known for its equine research, which will get a big boost with the addition of an \$80 million Equine Complex that is currently under construction. The facility will provide a home for equine science education, research and outreach. The university's new Equine Initiative will graduate tomorrow's industry leaders and generate research in veterinary medicine that will improve the care and welfare of horses—goals that Morris Animal Foundation shares.

In fact, the Foundation recently increased its on-campus outreach, and Texas A&M is one of six schools with a student ambassador who hosts Foundation-related events and educational sessions. Last November, the first in a series of "Lunch and Learns" was held on campus, offering more than 150 students and faculty members a glimpse into the work of Morris Animal Foundation and the projects we are currently funding at Texas A&M. Additional Lunch and Learns are scheduled for this year and will feature a wide range of presentations from Foundation-funded researchers. 🍷



FUNDED STUDIES AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SINCE 1956

Equine	32
Canine	22
Feline	9
Wildlife/exotic pets	9
Llama/alpaca	5
Multiple species	2

79 total studies

A commitment to equine health: Dr. Noah Cohen

By ALLEN BYRNE



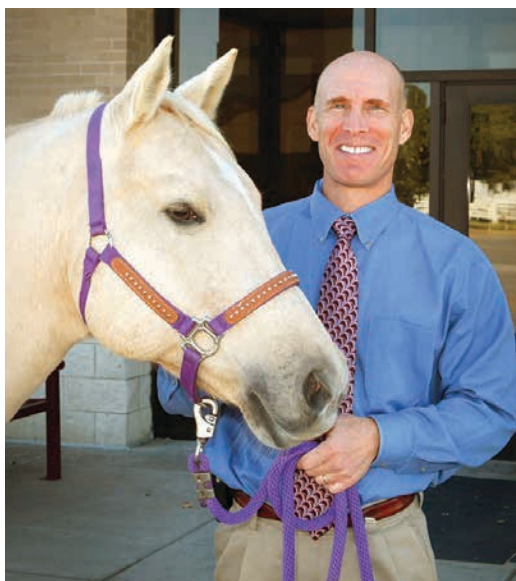
RESEARCHER PROFILE

Dr. Noah Cohen, of Texas A&M University, is committed to equine research that has a strong welfare component. He received his first Morris Animal Foundation grant in 1996, which he used to examine diagnostic testing for *Cryptosporidium parvum* and to determine the pathogen's prevalence in horses.

Since then he's received four additional grants from the Foundation, all of which are being used to investigate novel approaches for vaccinating foals and regulating the developmental changes that occur in their immune systems. The overall goal driving Dr. Cohen and his research team is to prevent infectious diseases of horses, with an emphasis on infections in neonates.

While Dr. Cohen has been on the receiving end of numerous Morris Animal Foundation grants, he has also given back to the organization. From 2009 to 2012, Dr. Cohen was a member of the Foundation's Large Animal Scientific Advisory Board, lending his expertise to our review process. He also participated in the Morris Animal Foundation-sponsored Unwanted Horse Summit, which looked at this emerging issue.

"I know that Morris Animal Foundation places an emphasis on the welfare of horses. Thus, when I have had the good fortune of receiving a grant from the Foundation, I have special pride in doing work that is being recognized as important for the well-being of horses," Dr. Cohen says. 🗨️



NOAH COHEN, VMD, MPH, PhD, DACVIM

Professor & Associate Department Head
Texas A&M University

DR. NOAH COHEN'S EQUINE STUDIES TO DATE

	Completed Study	Current Study
"Diagnostic testing and prevalence of <i>Cryptosporidium parvum</i> in horses"	●	
"Molecular epidemiology of <i>Rhodococcus equi</i> foal pneumonia"	●	
"Epigenetic regulation of developmental changes in foal neutrophils"		●
"The role of gene copy number variation in susceptibility of foals to <i>Rhodococcus equi</i> "		●
"Developing an inactivated vaccine against <i>Rhodococcus equi</i> for foals"		●



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Probiotics improve treatment of feline IBD

By WINONA BURGESS, DVM, CPA, MBA

For more information on probiotic treatments for cats, check out the following publication by Colorado State University's research team:

Hart ML, Suchodolski JS, Steiner JM, Webb CB. Open-label trial of a multi-strain synbiotic in cats with chronic diarrhea. *J Feline Med Surg.* 2012;14:240-245.

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a common cause of chronic vomiting and diarrhea in cats. Current treatments, such as dietary changes, antibiotics, steroids and immunosuppressive drugs, often fail to control clinical signs and can cause adverse side effects. Consequently, owners are seeking alternatives to these current treatment standards. Although anecdotal evidence may suggest that alternative therapies are effective, our current knowledge of the actual effects of alternative therapies is limited. Evidence-based research helps veterinarians choose therapies that have been scientifically shown to work.

In a study funded by Morris Animal Foundation, scientists at Colorado State University evaluated a veterinary-specific, commercially available probiotic for the treatment of IBD. The results of the study showed that probiotic supplementation was safe in all cats and that approximately 70 percent of owners reported an improvement in their cat's clinical signs (mostly diarrhea) after a three-week course of probiotics.

Interestingly, the researchers found that there was no significant difference between healthy cats and cats with IBD in the structure of their intestinal microbial environment. This finding suggests that the beneficial effects of probiotics may be related to changes in the cat's immune system stimulated by the probiotics.



▲ Dr. Craig Webb learned that probiotic supplementation helps alleviate diarrhea in cats.

“It may be that probiotics trigger the cat’s own system to increase production of beneficial substances,” says Craig Webb, PhD, DVM, lead researcher.

The clinical results of this study suggest that veterinarians should consider probiotic supplementation in cats with chronic diarrhea.

“By far, the most rewarding aspect of this Morris Animal Foundation grant for me was [helping the many] owners who had been struggling with sick cats experiencing chronic diarrhea and who, because of economic hardships, were unable to do much more than trial treat and hope,” Dr. Webb says. “Because of entry into the study, they received crucial diagnostic testing that they otherwise would have had to forgo.”

Probiotic treatments not only may help cats but may also prove applicable to treatment for chronic diarrhea in dogs. 🐾

New systematic review dives deep into CCL research

By JEAN VORE



Rupture of the cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) is the most common cause of hind-limb lameness, pain and subsequent stifle joint osteoarthritis in dogs. It is estimated that pet owners in the United States alone spend more than \$1 billion annually in treating CCL disease; however, there is little data comparing the outcomes of various therapies and treatments.

In a recent survey of nearly 10,000 American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) members, veterinarians identified CCL disease as a high-priority topic in need of systematic review. As a result, Morris Animal Foundation is partnering with AAHA to fund an independent review of CCL research to identify, appraise and summarize the results of current research on treatment options for CCL disease.

“Through this partnership, we will provide the veterinary community with an authoritative source on existing data and best clinical practices for CCL disease,” says David Haworth, DVM,

PhD, president and CEO of Morris Animal Foundation. “This project speaks to both our missions—encouraging and supporting the best science—and will help inform veterinarians of the most current, up-to-date research practices. In turn, veterinarians can provide the best care for their patients.”

Steven C. Budsberg, DVM, BS, MS, DACVS, and co-investigators from the University of Georgia will be teaming up with Mary Sarah Bergh, DVM, MS, DACVS, DACVSMR, and her team from Iowa State University to review the rapidly evolving and ongoing research on the treatment of CCL disease. Results are expected by early 2014 and will be shared with the veterinary community through Morris Animal Foundation and AAHA publications and presentations. Any identified gaps in knowledge will also be shared with appropriate groups to guide further research and continue to improve best practices for treating dogs with CCL disease. 🐾



◀ *A retrospective study may provide valuable insight into appropriate treatment for cranial cruciate ligament disease.*

TOP VETERINARY STUDY PARTICIPANTS

More than 200 veterinarians are already participating with their clients in the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study. Each of these veterinarians has three canine clients in the study.

SCOTT T. CARPENTER, DVM

*Arvada West Veterinary Hospital
Arvada, Colorado*

MICHAEL A. LAPPIN, DVM

*The Animal House
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts*

MARGARET R. LEVY, DVM

*North Kingstown Animal Hospital
North Kingstown, Rhode Island*

*Get your clinic involved at
www.CanineLifetimeHealth.org*



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FOUNDATION

Extended-release tablet may provide better seizure management

By WINONA BURGESS,
DVM, CPA, MBA



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

In a Morris Animal Foundation–funded clinical trial, Dawn Merton Boothe, DVM, MS, PhD, and her research team at Auburn University tested an extended-release anticonvulsant drug for use in the control of epilepsy in dogs. They learned that extended-release administration has great potential.

Previous studies have shown that levetiracetam (commercially known as Keppra) is well tolerated by dogs, even at concentrations that exceed the maximum therapeutic range for humans. However, the half-life of Keppra in dogs is very short (usually less than two hours), so drug levels are often subtherapeutic or not detectable at the end of an eight-hour dosing interval.

To find a better treatment option, Dr. Boothe and her team studied the drug levels of a new extended-release levetiracetam that was recently approved for use in humans. They discovered

that a single oral dose of the extended-release levetiracetam (Keppra XR) safely maintained therapeutic blood concentrations in dogs for at least 12 hours. In addition, they found that the bioavailability of the drug was much higher in fasted dogs than in those that were fed.

The research team noted that the only limitation of the new extended-release version of levetiracetam was the tablet size. Because Keppra XR is only available in 750 mg tablets, this could potentially limit its use to dogs weighing 15 kg or more.

Dr. Boothe and her team recommend frequent monitoring when establishing a proper dosing regimen for each patient. However, once this regimen has been established, dogs receiving Keppra don't require any more frequent monitoring than those receiving other anticonvulsant drugs. 🗨️

Dr. Boothe's Foundation-funded study at Auburn University may help German Shepherds and other breeds that have a genetic predisposition to epilepsy.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

We want to hear from you. Are there medical topics you wish to hear more about, ideas you have for how we can better share information, or health issues you wish we would address? Share your thoughts at vetinfo@MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.