



SJDAWC NEWS

NUMBER 44, 2024 FALL EDITION

SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE *at the Atlantic Veterinary College*



PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND



AVC WELCOMES NEW DEAN



Dr. Dominique Griffon

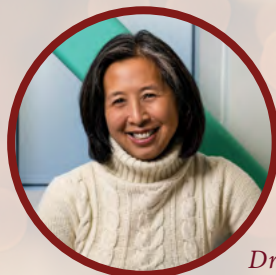
The Atlantic Veterinary College welcomed Dr. Dominique Griffon as its new Dean in January 2024. In this role, Dr. Griffon has become the new chair for the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre's Management Board. Dr. Griffon comes to AVC and the SJDAWC with 25 years of experience training veterinary students in small animal surgery. Before joining AVC, she was professor of small animal surgery and associate dean of research in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Western University of Health Sciences, California. We are thrilled to have Dr. Griffon as part of our SJDAWC team.

ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE SYMPOSIUM

The 19th annual Animal Welfare in Practice symposium focused on the human dimension of animal welfare, including the interconnectedness between animal welfare and the community. The symposium attracted veterinary students, veterinarians, and other members of the community to engage in important discussions about the role of people in the lives of animals under our care.

DR. MICHELLE LEM AND DR. PAUL ROBB

On Friday, September 13, Drs. Michelle Lem and Paul Robb from Community Veterinary Outreach kicked off the symposium with a presentation titled “A conversation about social change and animal welfare.”



Dr. Michelle Lem

Dr. Lem is the founder of Community Veterinary Outreach, a registered charity with the mandate to “improve the health of homeless and vulnerable housed communities through veterinary care to their pets, and to connect their humans with health and social services.”



Dr. Paul Robb

Dr. Robb is currently the regional director of the Halifax branch of Community Veterinary Outreach.

In their interactive session, Drs. Lem and Robb discussed how human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time. This social change has led to many advancements in our understanding of animal welfare, yet there are still many barriers to change. The presentation ended with a reminder that even small actions can make a big difference in the lives of people and animals.

DR. MICHELLE LEM

On Saturday, September 14, Dr. Lem gave a presentation titled “The human experience in animal welfare: Perspectives from veterinary social work.” In addition to founding Community Veterinary Outreach and being a practicing veterinarian, Dr. Lem also obtained a master’s of social work degree focusing on the link between human and animal violence, pet ownership among marginalized populations, well-being in the veterinary profession, and One Health approaches to intervention and practice.

Based on her diverse experiences, Dr. Lem shared some lessons learned about resilience and risk within veterinary medicine. This included experiences with suffering of both animals and people, including mental anguish and hardships experienced by veterinarians. She explained how many veterinarians are also exposed to injustice, such as working with clients who may not be able to afford to care for their animals.

The presentation ended with examples of how veterinarians can become more resilient through self-awareness, reflection, and compassion for both the people and animals around them. Dr. Lem also emphasized the importance of setting boundaries and finding meaningful support systems to help veterinarians cope emotionally with the suffering and injustice that they experience in practice.

WE WELCOME FEEDBACK!

Please contact us at animalwelfare@upepei.ca to receive the newsletter (in full colour) by email and to be added to our email list for occasional upcoming events.

To learn how you can support the Centre, please go to upepei.ca/awc or write to:

**The Sir James Dunn
Animal Welfare Centre**
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince
Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI,
Canada C1A 4P3

*All donations are
tax deductible.*

DR. QUINN RAUSCH



Dr. Quinn Rausch gave a presentation called “Using Canadian data and community partnership to understand and improve animal healthcare in underserved communities.” Dr. Rausch is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Ontario Veterinary College and is conducting research as part of the Kim and Stu Lang Community Healthcare Partnership Program.

Dr. Rausch’s current research has focused on compiling information about organizations in Canada that work to increase veterinary care in underserved communities. This included an online search for organizations followed by a survey sent to each organization to understand their barriers to care and how they evaluate their programs. The next step of this work is to determine how effective different strategies are at reducing barriers to veterinary care, and how organizations may be mitigating intersecting barriers.

DR. JOHN VANLEEUEWEN



Dr. John VanLeeuwen, professor in Health Management at AVC, gave a presentation on “How veterinarians can enhance animal care for better communities in Kenya and Northern Canada.” Dr. VanLeeuwen’s work in Kenya, in collaboration with Farmers helping Farmers, first began through the creation of a fourth-year rotation for both AVC and University of Nairobi students to provide health care to livestock in Kenya. This experience led to formal research projects helping smallholder dairy farmers in Kenya improve the comfort of their cattle, which, in turn, results in better milk production and productivity of their animals.

Dr. VanLeeuwen also described his work in collaboration with Veterinarians without Borders bringing veterinary care to Northern Canada through the Northern Animal Health Initiative. The vision of this organization is to partner with communities to provide animal care services, including dog population management.

DR. MARTI HOPSON



Dr. Marti Hopson, adjunct faculty and lecturer in Community of Practice at AVC, presented on “The Chinook Project: A multidisciplinary approach to veterinary care in Northern Communities.” The Chinook Project, first established in 2005, provides veterinary care to dogs in remote locations in Northern Canada, including the provision of vaccinations, neutering, and other medical care.

The Chinook Project is a great learning opportunity for veterinary students, as it provides fourth-year students with valuable education and cultural experience as part of a clinical rotation. Dr. Hopson also described research exploring the experiences of veterinary service providers and students who have taken part in this project.



Special thanks to our partners for the support:



PEI Department
of Agriculture

Find more information about the
symposium on our webpage at
awc.upei.ca/animal-welfare-in-practice

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SJDAWC

NEW PHD STUDENT STUDYING SLEEPING COWS

Gustavo Dias joined the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre in May 2024 to start his PhD degree. Gustavo is from Brazil where he obtained his master's degree from the University of São Paulo.

Gustavo's PhD research is focused on sleep and cognition of calves. The study of sleep in farm animals is an area that is constantly growing as it may reflect how animals cope with their environment. Sleep is important during the whole life of an animal; however, young animals tend to sleep more often with increased REM sleep. Impairment in sleep during this phase of their lives may

impact them over time. There is still more to learn in how the environment is affecting sleep, and how the lack of sleep affects the welfare of dairy animals. Gustavo is supervised by Dr. Katy Proudfoot, and his research is supported by a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Discovery Grant.

"I would like to thank the SJDAWC and NSERC for funding this research opportunity."

Gustavo Dias

Gustavo Dias



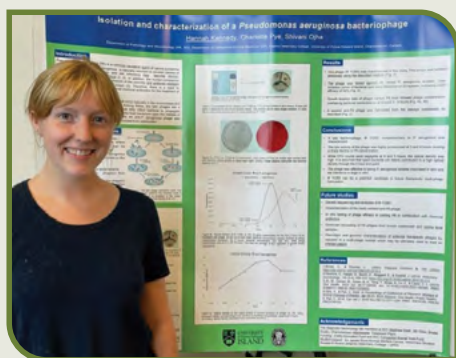
HANNAH KENNEDY WINS TOP AWARD FOR POSTER

Congratulations to Hannah Kennedy, AVC Class of 2026, for winning first prize for the top poster at the 2024 AVC Summer Research and Leadership Program poster presentation.

This summer, Hannah completed a project with Dr. Shivani Ojha, titled "Isolation and characterization of a *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* bacteriophage." They tested an anti-*Pseudomonas* bacteriophage (a virus that attacks bacteria) against clinical isolates of *P. aeruginosa* submitted to the Diagnostic Services lab in the AVC Veterinary Teaching Hospital. The bacteriophage killed 50 per cent of the tested isolates. They also demonstrated that the phage inhibited bacterial growth three

to four hours after introduction to the bacterial culture. Finally, they isolated a second anti-*Pseudomonas* bacteriophage from Charlottetown wastewater.

By participating in veterinary research at AVC with SJDAWC funding, Hannah contributed to early drug development for a debilitating skin infection. Hannah felt her project was meaningful to the veterinary community at large, and she enjoyed learning valuable bacteriology laboratory techniques beyond what was covered in the bacteriology course curriculum. Her mentor, Dr. Ojha, guided her every step of the way and was a joy to work with.



Hannah Kennedy

"I recommend any student wanting to get involved in research at AVC to apply for the SJDAWC Veterinary Summer Research award, no matter your experience level!"

Hannah Kennedy, Class of 2026

To find out how to apply for a 2024 SJDAWC VetSRA (Veterinary Summer Research Award), please visit our website at awc.upei.ca/summer-research

CASEY WHITEHOUSE BENEFITS FROM TRAVEL AWARD

Casey Whitehouse was a recipient of a SJDAWC student travel award for an external rotation related to animal welfare. Casey was appreciative for the support of the SJDAWC to take part in the Dairy on Farm Clinical Rotation at the John Fetrow Center for Dairy Excellence with the University of Minnesota's College of Veterinary Medicine. This rotation involved spending two weeks working with a 4,500-cow jersey herd, diagnosing and treating disease in dairy cattle. There was valuable opportunity to learn about the day-to-day operation of a modern large dairy, and extensive experience and discussion of the principles and practice of dairy production medicine took place.

Most of this rotation was spent discussing topics surrounding animal

welfare. They monitored and screened cows that recently gave birth, as well as managed sick cows and calves within the herd.

There was extensive discussion regarding safe handling, monitoring, treatments, and euthanasia of severely ill cows. The rotation provided Casey with an opportunity to perform a common method of euthanasia on live animals in a safe environment.

During the rotation, she developed and practiced low-stress animal handling techniques (movement and restraint), assessed animal behaviour, and mitigated the impact of painful procedures (most commonly right flank omentopexies) using local and regional anesthesia to improve cow comfort.



"This rotation was valuable in ensuring a higher standard of care, leading to healthier animals and improved productivity."

Casey Whitehouse, Class of 2025

NEW MEMBERS JOIN SJDAWC MANAGEMENT BOARD

In addition to Dr. Dominique Griffon, the SJDAWC also welcomes two new members of its management board. Dr. Beverly Dawe, Chief Veterinary Officer from Newfoundland and Labrador, will serve as an external veterinarian representative. This will be the first time that this position is filled by a veterinarian from Newfoundland and Labrador.

Laura Groves, AVC Class of 2026, has also joined the board as the student representative. Laura is currently the president of the AVC Animal Welfare Club and has participated in many SJDAWC-sponsored events, including the AVMA's Animal Welfare Assessment Contest in 2022. We look forward to working with both Dr. Dawe and Laura.



Dr. Beverly Dawe



Laura Groves

SPOTLIGHT ON EQUINE WELFARE

Dr. Caroline Ritter, assistant professor in Health Management, and Dr. Kathleen MacMillan, associate professor in Health Management, received an SJDAWC research grant to understand horse owners' perception of their horses' welfare as well as improve horse owners' awareness and compliance with the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines. This project was also supported by the PEI Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).

Two graduate students, Dr. Molly Mills and Megan Ross, were trained as part of this project. After an initial assessment of the welfare of horses on PEI, the researchers provided horse owners with a "benchmarking" report that compared the results from their farm to others in the region. At a second visit approximately one year later, horse owners improved their awareness and compliance with the Code of Practice. Some indicators of horse welfare were also improved during the second visit, including their horses' body condition.

A survey to gather horse owners' attitudes towards horse welfare highlighted that owners may perceive trade-offs between their horses' physical and mental well-being and their ability to provide horses with the best quality care. For example, horse owners were less likely to agree that their horse's standard of care is better when kept outdoors and in groups but believed that their horses' physical and mental well-being were improved. Horse owners appeared to prioritize their horses' physical and mental well-being by keeping their horses in outdoor group conditions for at least 12 to 24 hours per day, which contrasts literature that suggests many horses still face extended periods in confined and individual spaces. Overall, understanding the way that horse owners perceive horse welfare will provide insight into the best ways to support and facilitate good horse care.



Megan Ross (Photo credit Friesian Meadows)



Dr. Molly Mills

2025 WEBINAR SERIES ON SMALL COMPANION ANIMALS

In 2025, our webinar series will focus on understanding the welfare of small companion animals, such as rabbits, guinea pigs, and rodents. Each of these species has unique needs that are different from traditional pets like cats and dogs. More details about this series will be coming soon.



AWARDS

2024 CHRISTOFOR AWARD IN ANIMAL WELFARE

Alyssa McGee, AVC Class of 2025, received the 2024 Christofo Award in Animal Welfare for her long-standing interest in improving the welfare of animals.

Alyssa's animal career began as a volunteer with the Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando's shelter throughout high school and eventually developed into working in the shelter as staff post-undergraduate, moving into the veterinary field as she was applying for school. Working at this facility helped her to develop an interest in animal welfare and serving underserved communities.

As an AVC student, Alyssa competed twice in the AVMA Animal Welfare Assessment Contest, served on the executive board as a class representative and president of the Animal Welfare Club, class representative for the feral cat spay and neuter program CAT Action, and a foster volunteer at the PEI Humane Society.

Having completed a master's degree in veterinary forensic sciences, Alyssa hopes to one day fight for animal welfare in the legal realm.

Alyssa McGee



2024 DR. TOM A. W. TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP

The 2024 Dr. Tom A.W. Taylor Scholarship was awarded to Carissa Grove, AVC Class of 2026. Established in memory of Dr. Taylor, this award is given to a student who is well rounded and academically proficient and has demonstrated initiative and interest in research activities.

Carissa is also completing her master's degree, which she started prior to entering vet school. She has been involved in various research projects in the past, mostly pertaining to wild fish and invertebrates. With this background, she knew upon

entering vet school that she still wanted to be involved in research and focus on wild species. This has remained true, and she has continued to develop her skills and knowledge to pursue both paths. After graduation, she is looking to further her education and training by completing a residency. Carissa stays involved by being on multiple committees to put on events where students can engage in extra learning opportunities. In her spare time, she likes to be outdoors, camping and hiking, but she also enjoys reading and lounging with her pets.



Carissa Grove



"HAY" EVERYONE WE WANT TO THANK OUR SUPPORTERS!



SUPPORTERS SPOTLIGHT

We gratefully acknowledge the sustained financial support of **The Christofer and The Sir James Dunn Foundations**, without which the SJDAWC would not exist.

We also thank the following organizations and individuals who have supported the SJDAWC in the last year:

- Fairview Animal Hospital
- Mission Kitty Inc.
- SAVMA-AVC Chapter
- Sensor Health Inc. Veterinary Sciences
- Victoria City Kennel Club
- Holly and Les Burridge
- Eric Butler and Suzanne Rocca-Butler
- Yvonne Chypchar and Linda Kelly
- Alice Crook
- Daphne Davey
- Katharine E. Gordon
- Glenn Loranger
- Andrew MacLeod and Alison Rideout
- Janet Mah and Kevin Kane
- Derek Mathers
- Stephen and Tina McCarthy
- Fran Mercier
- Kathy Morrissey
- Rosemary O'Malley-Keyes
- Sheila and Ken Park
- Karen Pyra
- Maria Rodriguez
- Julie Waddell
- Anonymous

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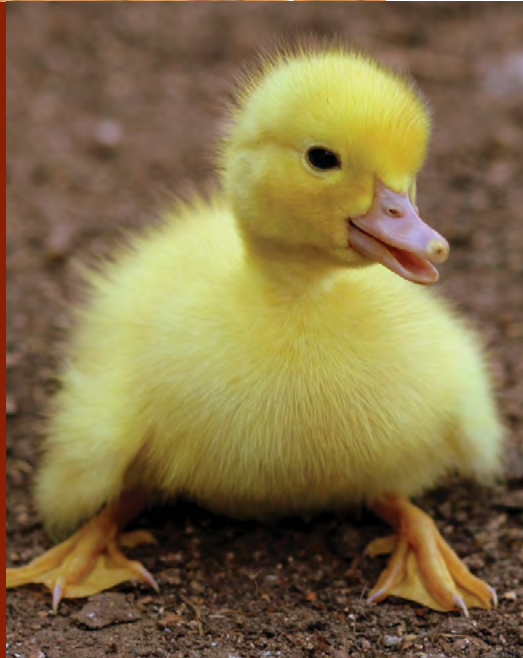
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