



2003 YEAR IN REVIEW

new work in COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE

Rebecca Ledger, new post-doctoral researcher in the Animal Welfare Program, is working to improve the successful adoption of unwanted cats and dogs through her research.

Rebecca has been developing practical tools that enable rescue shelters to improve the care and re-homing of animals in their facilities. By better defining characteristics of individual animals, she is able to assess their requirements for training and housing, and achieve a good match with potential new owners.

“Dogs in shelters are often perceived as having behaviour problems, and our goal is to provide a kennel environment that helps prevent the development of such problems,” says Rebecca. “We are also developing tools to support shelters and pet owners through the adoption process. With better tools we hope to improve the fit between animals and their owners.”

By implementing her techniques in the UK, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has achieved significant reductions in dogs returned to shelters, and the same tests are being adopted and validated in local Vancouver and Surrey shelters. She is now working to develop training courses for BC-SPCA shelter staff to use these resources. Because original owners often know the dog best, she has also developed a simple, effective questionnaire to assess the dog’s personality right when it is dropped off – a tool already used in shelters across BC.

After gaining her M.Sc., Rebecca worked as an Animal Behaviourist in the pet food industry and obtained her Ph.D. in companion animal behaviour from Brunel University in London in 1998. She has since been a RSPCA Fellow, the Sanofi Fellow at De Montfort University and a Friskies Fellow and Lecturer at Brunel University. She is currently conducting collaborative research with the BC-SPCA and co-supervises the projects of several students in the UBC Animal Welfare Program.



Rebecca Ledger, Post-doctoral Researcher

Chris Fraser



Marina von Keyserlingk, Assistant Professor

NEW FACULTY MEMBER

The Animal Welfare Program is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Marina (Nina) von Keyserlingk as a new faculty member and Assistant Professor.

Nina’s love of animals began as a child growing up on her family’s cattle ranch in British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley. After completing an undergraduate degree in Animal Science at UBC and a M.Sc. at the University of Alberta, she returned to UBC to complete her Ph.D. in 1995. Following several years as a research scientist in the animal feed industry, she joined the Animal Welfare Program as a post-doctoral fellow in 2001 and was recently appointed to faculty member.

Nina brings unique skills to the Program. Initially trained in nutrition, she has a strong interest in how behaviour and nutrition combine to enhance the welfare of animals, especially dairy cattle, beef cattle and companion animals. Her current work includes a study of how improved understanding of feeding behaviour can help in the early identification and treatment of sick cows, especially during the vulnerable time around calving.

“As a third faculty member in the Program, Nina is a tremendous addition who will expand the range of research we continue to offer,” says Animal Welfare Professor David Fraser. Nina has already taken on the supervision of several graduate students, undergraduate research projects and international visitors, as well as providing key input into many of the Program’s activities.

With her lifelong connections to agriculture in British Columbia, Nina’s research will provide practical solutions to animal welfare problems, benefiting both animals and producers in BC and around the world.

5 more years! The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) recently announced a five year contribution of \$148,000 per year to maintain the Animal Welfare Program, matching the contributions of the Program’s sponsoring organizations. Many thanks to NSERC and the sponsors (see reverse) for their continued and generous support.

New Awards

National and international recognition of the Animal Welfare Program continues to grow. David Fraser was recently awarded the **International Animal Welfare Award** of the British Society of Animal Science and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The award recognizes his “outstanding contributions to the science, philosophy and practice of animal welfare.” David also received the **Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal** from the Government of Canada for his outstanding service to Canada. The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies nominated him for the medal.

Publications

The Program continues to provide an important resource for research findings and general information about animal welfare for those who need it most. Many scientific articles were published and contributions were included in various newsletters for farmers, the humane movement and veterinary professionals, among others.

Along with the usual output of publications, David Fraser and visiting Professor Rod Preece of Wilfrid Laurier University recently published a new edition of the 1928 historical book *Love for Animals and How it Developed in Great Britain*, by Dix Harwood. The book traces the history of British compassion for animals from the Middle Ages to 1800. An extensive introduction and explanatory notes written by Preece and Fraser make this historical classic accessible to modern readers. UBC’s W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics generously funded Rod Preece during an extended visit to UBC, making the book possible.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Keeping with its local and global reputation, the Animal Welfare Program shared its expertise through numerous presentations in BC, Canada and around the world. Faculty members gave presentations locally in Vancouver, Vancouver Island, the Okanagan and Fraser Valley; as well as many locations across Canada, the US and around the world, including Mexico City, Seoul, Bristol and Prague. Students alone gave more than 25 presentations at international conferences in locations such as Italy, Arizona and California.

Veronique Bouchard and Juliana Huzzey,
NSERC summer research students



Fernando Wolf, visiting graduate student

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

As one of the few university-based animal welfare centres worldwide, the Program receives international visitors who come for education and research experience. Among the visitors this year:

Dr. Christoph Winckler is Head of Animal Husbandry at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria. Christoph’s research includes on-farm animal welfare assessment, dairy cattle health and the impact of veterinary drugs in the environment.

Dr. José Fregonesi is a lecturer in Animal Science at Londrina University, Parana, Brazil. His research focuses on improving environments for farm animals.

Dr. Marek Spinka is a senior scientist at the Research Institute of Animal Production in Prague, Czech Republic and is one of the world’s leading experts in farm animal behaviour.

Fernando Wolf is a graduate student from Florianopolis, Brazil. He is researching how feeding systems and group dynamics affect the health, welfare and growth of dairy calves.

THANK-YOU!

Our sincere thanks to the following sponsors whose 5-year commitment was essential to securing federal support through NSERC:

BC SPCA
BC Veterinary Medical Association + members
BC Dairy Foundation
BC Milk Producers Association
South Coastal Dairy Education Association
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
Alberta Farm Animal Care Association
Westgen
BC Broiler Hatching Egg Producers Association
BC Egg Producers
Unifeed, Chilliwack

New grants were also received from the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Vancouver Foundation, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Recent Degrees

Sara Dubois, M.Sc. Based on extensive interviews, Sara examined the goals, challenges and needs of wildlife rehabilitation centres in BC. She received a Vancouver Foundation grant to implement her research results in cooperation with the BC Wildlife Rehabilitators Network.

Gosia Zdanowicz, M.Sc. Her research focused on mastitis and cow health in relation to the use of bedding in dairy farms. Gosia’s work was supported by the South Coastal Dairy Education Association and by Investment Agriculture.

We need your help!

Despite generous support from sponsoring organizations, the Animal Welfare Program depends heavily on individual donations to maintain its international work for animals.

For more information on programs or ways of giving, please contact: (ph) 604.822-8910 (email) david.love@ubc.ca or visit www.agsci.ubc.ca/animalwelfare

Check out our updated website for information on research, publications, education and more www.agsci.ubc.ca/animalwelfare

Congratulations!