Taking a big step forward

Veterinary researchers and Anivive license antiviral drug for fatal cat disease

For many cat owners, help is on the horizon with a viral cat disease that can be deadly. A new collaboration is promoting the commercial development of GC376, an antiviral compound for feline infectious peritonitis, or FIP, which previously had no effective treatment or cure.

Drs. Yunjeong Kim and Kyeong-Ok “KC” Chang, virologists in the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. William Grouats, a medicinal chemist at Wichita State University, have been collaborating since 2006 on the development of antiviral drugs for important human and animal viruses.

“We have been working on antiviral drugs that inhibit a specific virus protease of some important human and animal viruses, and we were able to make very potent inhibitors of FIP,” Dr. Kim said. “Through collaborative work with Dr. Niels Pedersen at the University of California, Davis — including a field trial on feline patients — we became increasingly hopeful that antiviral treatment may one day substantially benefit cats with FIP. Licensing our compound to Anivive Lifesciences is a huge step forward in transitioning our research to commercialization to make this treatment available to the public.”

FIP is a progressive and fatal disease caused by a feline coronavirus that can affect both domestic and wild cats. Feline coronaviruses are the cause of viral enteritis, which is typically harmless. But in rare instances, FIP can arise, spread throughout the body and cause death, particularly in cats age 2 and younger.

The licensing agreement was coordinated by the Kansas State University Institute for Commercialization with Anivive Lifesciences, a California company whose proprietary software accelerates the discovery and development process of new pet medicines.

Five new students in the CVM have been chosen for the largest veterinary scholarship program offered by the state of Kansas: The Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas (VTPRK).

This year’s recipients are first-year veterinary students: Natasha Vangundy, William Patterson, Shaylee Flax, Colton Hull and Whitney Sloan.

“The VTPRK program fulfills an important educational mission and a service mission for the state of Kansas,” Interim Dean Dr. Bonnie Rush said.

First-year students selected for VTPRK program

First-year students picked for VTPRK, from left: Natasha Vangundy, William Patterson, Shaylee Flax, Colton Hull and Whitney Sloan.
Veterinary student externs at AVMA HQ

By Xiaotong "Maggie" Wu

I am a third-year veterinary student at Kansas State University, attending as a member of the U.S.-China Joint DVM Program. I am working hard to be a fine candidate toward becoming one of the future leaders in the Chinese veterinary medicine industry. This summer, I completed an externship at the AVMA headquarters in Schaumburg, Illinois. This externship exposed me to a completely new area which I could not experience at other schools or within clinical externships.

I learned about this opportunity with the AVMA because of the longstanding friendship it has with the Chinese Veterinary Medical Association. The Chinese VMA is one of the most important supporters for the U.S.-China DVM Scholarship Program, which helps underwrite the expenses. The AVMA accepts students for externships as a part of an effort to build stronger international connections in veterinary medicine.

I was very lucky to have the opportunity to do this three-week long externship this summer with Dr. Beth Sabin, director of global outreach at AVMA. I am really grateful for all the support from AVMA and U.S.-China Center for Animal Health. I had a great time at Schaumburg, and learned a lot about leadership in the U.S. veterinary medicine industry. Working closely with Dr. Sabin, I learned how the AVMA runs and what its management system is like. I met almost all of the AVMA faculty and really enjoyed the AVMA’s happy working atmosphere.

Kudos to Lesa Reves! She was presented with the Kansas Society for Healthcare Central Service Professionals (KSHCSP) (CRCST) in the Central Prep Department of the Veterinary Health Center. Lesa was nominated by Susan Hazelbaker, agricultural technician at the Veterinary Health Center. "Lesa has worked extremely hard to learn her craft," Susan Hazelbaker said.

Reves is Technician of the Year

Congrats to fourth-year student Mark Sparé, who was among 12 students nationwide to receive a $5,000 AABP Foundation – Zoetis Scholarship award at the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) conference held Sept. 14-16 in Phoenix, Arizona. The scholarship is designed to support the most superior third-year students with potential to become outstanding bovine veterinarians.

CVM News Ticker

Celebrate Kansas City One Health Day by learning how the collaborative approach to human, animal and environmental health may help society outsmart antibiotic resistance.

The event, “Outsmarting Antibiotic Resistance,” is from 3-6 p.m. on Nov. 1 at K-State Olathe and will be livestreamed on Zoom for those unable to attend in person. Activities and speakers will focus on how the One Health approach relates to antibiotic stewardship.

The event stems from a partnership with the College of Veterinary Medicine, K-State Olathe, BioNexus KC, and BioKansas.

Dr. Mike Apley, Frick professor of production medicine/clinical pharmacology at the CVM, will deliver the keynote, “Antibiotic Resistance — A One Health Perspective.”