

# CSU Tails



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News from the CSU Veterinary Science program

ISSUE 2 2008



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# Welcome from Head of School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences Professor Kym Abbott

Building developments continue apace for the new School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences. Over the past few weeks we have been able to move the School headquarters into the refurbished spaces of the EH Graham Building. This solidly constructed brick expression of post-war strength was opened in 1955 and named after Mr EH Graham who was the Minister of Agriculture and Food Production in the NSW Labor Government and held the seat of Wagga Wagga from 1941 until his death in 1957. The extensive renovations have created a highly functional focus for the School, with academic staff offices close to many of the teaching spaces, administrative staff and student study areas.

The first point of contact for visitors at reception is School Secretary, Liz Anschaw, while Rhonda Thompson oversees both School finance and student academic matters. Kirrily Welsh, Trish Schipp and Ruth Roach also contribute to a range of administrative responsibilities. Recent additions to the academic staff include Jacob and Margaret Michelson (two Australians who have been working in Denmark), Jane Quinn from Edinburgh and Marie Bhanugopan from Sydney. Melbourne-based practitioner Eric Allan's initial short-term appointment to support the transition of students to university life, then postgraduate study, has now grown into a longer-term appointment enabling him to carry on his great work. Karianne Lievaart, from Utrecht, is an expert in small ruminant and in 2009 will join her husband on our permanent staff.

There are now 39 academic staff in the School, supported by 17 administrative and technical staff, in addition to staff supporting research activity. The past four years has been a period of extraordinary growth in staff, facilities and students.

Interest in student places in CSU's Veterinary Science program continues to rise. The percentage of students listing CSU's program as their first preference through the Universities Admissions Centre is 12% higher this year than last. Staff are currently assessing 358 written applications to determine who will be interviewed



Foyer of the EH Graham Building

for one of 60 places in 2009. I link the increasing strength of competition for a place at CSU to the good press given to our senior students by practitioners in the field. Veterinary practitioners provide a critical source of advice for intending students, and their opinions of the quality of our course are strongly influenced by their interactions with our students on clinical placements. Our student body is our best marketing tool.

Once again we are the grateful recipients of donations of many kinds. In particular the Albury-Wodonga Angus Breeders' Association has wound up and donated surplus funds (amounting to about \$18,000) to go towards the construction of a purpose-built facility for instruction in cattle artificial insemination. Prattley Livestock Equipment will erect the facility and has also contributed a generous discount to allow construction to proceed. Several Connemara breeders have leased us mares, fillies and a stallion for the students' practical classes, and we are pleased to have continuing support from many veterinarians and the veterinary practices that take in our students for their regular practical experience. Mars Petcare and Coopers Animal Health have kindly provided scholarships to ease the financial burden faced by the students, many of who have outside jobs to fit in around their studies and practice placements, which may involve lengthy travelling.

2009 promises to be as busy as 2008 on the construction front with tenders opening for the Veterinary Diagnostic

Laboratory and the Small Animal Clinic. This latter clinic will be located in the centre of Wagga Wagga and operate as a teaching hospital in conjunction with an established local veterinary practice. By this time next year our building program will be largely completed in time for our first cohort of students' to embark on their final year.

The School welcomed a recent visit from the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee to ensure everything was on track for the full accreditation visit in 2010. The accreditation team inspected the School's facilities, interviewed every staff member, reviewed documentation, lunched with students and met veterinary practitioners who have provided clinical placements to our students. Strong commendations were given to a number of areas of the Veterinary Science program including the Phase 2 curriculum. There are clearly many tasks still to complete in order to deliver the final two years of the program, but the team provided a clear roadmap for the School to follow to be in a strong position in 2010. The quality of the program to date reflects on the huge workloads that all members of the School have undertaken, with passion and enthusiasm. The strong sense of collegiality and mutual respect in the School came through very clearly to the accreditation team.

May I wish our readers, donors and supporters compliments of the season and best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2009.

# Working Together...

## Connemara Ponies and CSU

CSU's School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences and the Connemara Pony Breeders Society of Australia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to foster equine research and education.

CSU's courses in veterinary science, equine science and animal science all involve study in equine husbandry, training, breeding and health. The Bachelor of Equine Science is a long-standing course and taught using excellent facilities designed initially to teach handling and reproduction and more recently for training and competition. With the advent of the Veterinary Science program in 2005, there was a need to expand the School herd and in particular, to create a small breeding herd. That's where the Connemara pony comes into the picture.

These ponies have the right size and temperament to command respect from students without being intimidating. Their Irish working heritage means they are hardy and economical to maintain. They are athletic horses and both purebred and crossbred progeny are readily marketable.



*John Dawkins, Kym Abbott and Zita Denholm at the signing ceremony*

The School needs horses to train students in artificial insemination, fertility management, obstetrics and peri-natal care, animal nutrition and growth, farriery and general handling.

The Connemara Pony Breeders Society of Australia has been very generous in its donations of a stallion, mares and fillies. We are grateful to Bill Concannon, John Dawkins AO, Sue and Barton Clarke, Carla Weise-Smith and Penny Brown for offering their horses for use by the equine science and veterinary science students to develop skills including handling, breaking in, dentistry, reproduction and foal management.

Our stallion "Bill" was kindly leased to us by Catherine and Alistair McTaggart. He has an excellent temperament and has been kept busy servicing the mares and fillies, supervised by John Smart and his staff in CSU's Equine Centre.

Together, Charles Sturt University and the Connemara Pony Breeders Society of Australia look to a bright future.



*John Smart with Glenormiston Siobhan*



*Wychwood Willy Wagtail "Bill"*

*"These ponies have the right size and temperament to command respect from students without being intimidating."*



# Professional Experience Scholarship Ceremony

**The seminar room in CSU's new Veterinary Clinical Centre was the setting for the inaugural Professional Experience Scholarship Ceremony in October.**

Thirteen veterinary science students were the grateful recipients of the Professional Experience scholarships which provide financial help for the periods when they have to move from Wagga Wagga and their usual accommodation and employment to complete clinical placements.

Coopers Animal Health representatives Craig Stevenson and Greg Heeney were on hand to congratulate the students: Tara Mills, Bruno Ros, Coco Willsallen, Sarah Charlton, Meika Croker, Kimberly Groner, Elizabeth Coghlan, Jessica Cooke, Andrew Lamont and Anneliese Seager. The Coopers Professional Experience Scholarships are valued at \$750 each.

Veterinarians Peter and Mary Atkinson travelled from Moruya to present Emma Packer with their award and graciously agreed to present Alistair Grant and Emily Stearman with their scholarships on behalf of the Piper Street Veterinary Clinic.

Genevieve Mott presented Professor Kym Abbott with a cheque for \$18,000 on behalf of the Albury-Wodonga Angus Breeders' Association. These funds will be put towards the building of new artificial breeding facilities for the benefit of the students.

Prattley Livestock Equipment donated a \$2,500 discount off the construction cost of the \$35,000 facilities, which will be built by the company during the summer.

The Charles Sturt Foundation welcomes donations to assist students with scholarships. Donors may wish to specify how their donation is distributed e.g. to a student who comes from their region, or a student with a particular interest similar to the interests of the donor.



*The Scholarship recipients.*



*Mary and Peter Atkinson, Genevieve Mott and Professor Kym Abbott*

# Extramural Placements at Abattoirs

By John Glastonbury



During vacation periods in 2009, our Year 5 students will be spending a week obtaining experience in public health management at an approved export abattoir.

Given the strength of our course in animal production and the importance of the export meat industry to the Australian economy, it is critical that veterinary science graduates from Charles Sturt University have a solid grounding in the processing, hygiene, inspection and storage of meat for human consumption.

Learning outcomes for the placements will cover ante-mortem inspection, humane slaughter of domestic animals, post mortem inspections of carcasses, the principles of meat science and microbiology, principles of hygiene, quality assurance systems, legislation governing the production of food for human consumption and residues in animal products.

We are greatly indebted to the On-Plant-Veterinarians (OPV), employed by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), who will supervise the students. In addition to contact with the OPV, students will spend time online with meat inspectors and abattoir management to learn more about the commercial aspects of the meat industry, and with the Quality Manager to better understand HACCP principles.

Students will learn by observation, use of induction modules for OPVs developed by AQIS, and consideration, while on site, of assessment tasks developed by CSU staff. These will follow the Problem-Based-Learning format used in the on campus curriculum and will provide a framework and guide for the students' learning during the placement.

Development of our program of abattoir extramural studies has been

significantly assisted by veterinarian Mick Shiel and Carol Sheridan. Mick is the OPV with Norvic Food Processing Pty Ltd at Wodonga and his advice on the program and development of learning materials has been invaluable. Carol is the Manager of the AQIS Meat Program and she has made available selected Induction Modules for OPVs for use by students.

For their generous assistance, OPVs will be offered an adjunct academic appointment to CSU and a free diagnostic pathology service for any interesting lesions they wish to send us. The former is an honorary position which allows full use of the library, the physical facility and its electronic resources, use of other University facilities and a discount on the purchase of CSU wines.

Students will visit abattoirs in pairs. Initially about six abattoirs, within three to four hours of Wagga Wagga, will be used for placements. These abattoirs slaughter a range of sheep, cattle, goats and pigs. However, for students from further afield, particularly interstate, there will be scope to arrange placements at an abattoir closer to home.

Extramural placements at abattoirs will strengthen the training and experience of CSU veterinary science graduates in aspects of livestock production, contributing to the viability of the industry well into the future.

## TAILS Survey

Thank you to the people who returned the survey which was sent out to a sample of readers in the last issue of TAILS. This newsletter is sent to a wide variety of people including practising and retired veterinarians, industry personnel, product manufacturers, land holders, farmers and donors.

The returned surveys were from veterinarians aged 30 years and over.

The majority of people indicated that they read TAILS to follow the progress of CSU's Veterinary Science program, finding the articles informative and colourful and providing a good understanding of the program at CSU's Wagga Wagga Campus.

Most people had not visited the School's website ([www.csu.edu.au/faculty/science/savs](http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/science/savs)) but those that had found the information they wanted and made some suggestions for improving the content.

The respondents in the main did not share their TAILS with others and there was only one suggestion for improving the newsletter.





# Class of 2011 – Halfway Festival



Parents and friends relaxing at the game in front of the new marquee

The second Halfway Festival got underway in October with a weekend full of activities beginning with a welcome to parents by Professor Kym Abbott, who conducted a tour of the new Veterinary Clinical Centre.

The students organised a barbecue lunch for family and supporters at the Beres Elwood Oval, proudly showing off their new marquee. With perfect weather for the game, the rugby match was hard fought and narrowly won by the vets this year (last year the Ag boys triumphed). Tries were scored

by Ian Croft and Tom Loughnan to level the score, and it was up to Shahid Khalfan to kick the goal to win the match.

Organiser Tim Quast, thanked everyone for their enthusiastic participation and called on Kym Abbott to present the trophies. The Kym Abbott Trophy for the winning side was accepted by Rhys Duncan and the Doug Bryden Shield for Man of the Match was won by Stui Geard.

On the Saturday evening, a well attended dinner for the students,

staff and families was held in CSU's Convention Centre. The highlight of the evening was an auction which raised \$4,806 for Kurrajong Waratah. Cathy Smith from the charity attended the evening and thanked the students for their generous donation.

Kym Abbott spoke of the progress of the course and outlined the new facilities planned for the School. He then presented the Heidi Austin Prize (donated by Doug Bryden) for Excellence in Veterinary Practice to Stephanie Bullen.



Shahid Khalfan's try conversion



The Doug Bryden Man of the Match Award is presented to Stui Geard by Professor Kym Abbott



Professor Kym Abbott presents the Heidi Austin Prize for Excellence in Veterinary Practice to Stephanie Bullen

# Annual Veterinary Students' Association Ball

The third annual, award-winning Veterinary Students' Association (VSA) Ball, held at the CSU Crow Bar, was attended by a staunch sell-out crowd of 300 people. The theme of "Licensed to Kill" was well adopted, with more cap guns than a western movie, more garters than Moulin Rouge and more bow ties than found in Leigh Ladd's wardrobe. This event was such a success that it was voted Rivcoll's 'Club Event of the Year'.

Entertainment throughout the night was provided by "Rhythm Method" and the likes of Scott Norman, Tiggy Grillo, Peter Chenoweth and Tash Lees were witnessed showing up the students on the dance floor. Special mention must go to Jan Lievaart who had some particularly original dance moves.

The night was not over after the ball, with many heading into town to the Home Tavern. This journey, however, took longer for some than others after one bus had a blow out and the drivers didn't know how to change the tyre. It apparently did little to dampen anyone's night.

Thank you to the VSA committee for their efforts in making the night possible and a huge success. Thank you especially to Sarah Charlton, whose organisation and hard work is, as always, very much appreciated.

## Staff awards

Staff awards were a new addition to the 2008 Vet Ball. The VSA committee decided this was an appropriate way to let our teaching staff know that their diligence and patience was appreciated.

The categories and winners were:

**Rookie of the Year:** to a new staff member who has been largely involved with the students and made their mark – Bryan Hilbert.

**Students' Choice Award:** to a staff member who the student body believes deserves to be recognised for their contributions – Jan Lievaart.

**Lab Rat of the Year:** to the ever hard-working technical staff who ensure our practical sessions are organised and go without a hitch – Joe Price.

**VUI award (vetting under the influence):** awarded to the staff member who is often seen about town late at night – Kirrily Welsh.

**Beyond the Call of Duty:** To the staff member who goes above and beyond their job description – Kym Abbott.

**Golden Staphie Perpetual Trophy – Staff Member of the Year:** the principal award to the staff member who displays superior interest and excellence in their teaching, is extremely approachable and is deemed by the student body to go that extra mile – John Glastonbury.

Congratulations to all the nominees and to the winners of these awards. Thank you to all of the staff for their efforts every year. We aim to have staff awards at all Vet balls in the future.

## Essay Writing and Photo Competition

Hill's Pet Nutrition this year introduced an essay writing and photo competition to veterinary science students. The best animal photos and the essay writing competition focused on pet nutrition. The winners were awarded Co-Op book vouchers at the vet ball. Congratulations to Glen Borrowdale and Jill Rogers who won the major prizes, while minor prizes went to Richard Sanders, Vanessa Buchholz and Amy Wynn. Kate Burnheim took out the essay writing competition. Thanks to Hill's Pet Nutrition for their support of the veterinary science students.



Graphic design student Annie Holdsworth with veterinary science students Joss Hoogstraten, Christine Healey, Amber Sargent and Cassie Weller at the ball.

*"This event was such a success that it was voted Rivcoll's 'Club Event of the Year'."*



Winner of the essay writing competition, Kate Burnheim.



# Tales from the Tea Room

## Goodbye...

Sadly we have to say goodbye to some very valued staff members -



Peter and Michele Davie

Professor Peter Davie has led the Anatomy group since the beginning of the Veterinary Science program at CSU and will be sorely missed by the School. He and wife Michele are returning to the cool green fields of New Zealand where Peter will continue his academic career as Professor of Anatomy at Massey University. Michele has been working in the reproduction lab and has been a valued contributor to the andrology service.



Kirrily Welsh with students at the races

Kirrily Welsh has been at CSU for 19 years working in a number of departments. She took on the job of Administrative Officer and formed a close liaison with the students and their families as the all-important initial contact for eager student applicants each year. Latterly she has had responsibility for the management of extramural placements and organising 350+ applications from potential students. She is leaving CSU to continue her studies in business management and we wish her well.

## Weddings... congratulations!



Heather and Jason Ip married on Daydream Island in the Whitsundays in August.



Greg Dale (class of 2010) married Suz Hadley (3rd year Pharmacy) in Wagga Wagga in September.

## New babies... welcome to these little folk!

June: Michael and Tanya Friend welcomed Jessica, who is a sister for Lachlan.

August: Fiona (class of 2011) and Brad Kelk welcomed Aimee, who is a sister for Jack.

September: Heidi Austin and Jack Henry welcomed Louis Antony, who is a brother for Rachel.

October: Bindi King and David Starr welcomed Poppy, who is a sister for Amelie.



In October, Karianne and Jan Lievaart welcomed Sylke, who is a sister for Jurre and Taeke.



Lauren Edmonson (class of 2011) married Cameron Tyrell in Walwa in October.

# Staff Profile: Jan and Karianne Lievaart

**Full Name:**

Jan and Karianne Lievaart

**Home Town:**

Utrecht, Netherlands

**School:**

Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Jan is a lecturer in Epidemiology

Karianne is a lecturer in Small Ruminant Medicine

**Family:**

Jurre, Taeke and Sylke



From Utrecht in the Netherlands to Wagga Wagga in inland Australia was a big move for Jan and Karianne Lievaart who joined the staff of the Veterinary Science program in 2007. Having accepted the job of lecturer in Epidemiology, Jan arrived in July to immediately begin his lecturing duties. Karianne and the boys, Jurre and Taeke, followed a few weeks later, then came Otje, the Jack Russell terrier, and finally Karianne's horse, Zonne, to complete the family.

After living all their lives in the crowded towns of Europe, they were quick to seek out a semi-rural retreat for a taste of country living. San Isidore was chosen for their new home where they have settled into village life.

It's a far cry from the tiny village of Babylonienbroek where Jan was born and spent his early years on his parents' farm raising sheep, dairy and beef cattle.

Jan always knew he would be a vet but had to gain a degree in agriculture before he could be accepted into the veterinary science course at Utrecht. Following graduation he began his veterinary career in the dairy industry.

Jan's academic career began when he joined the staff at Utrecht working with the university's ambulatory team of vets treating mainly dairy

cattle. He became interested in the whole herd health approach of farm management and began a herd health program for local farmers which was a popular and welcomed move.

Karianne was born in the city of Rotterdam surrounded by her pets but she never expected to be a vet. The sight of blood she was sure would be too much for her. While studying to be a healthcare teacher, she took on a job as a veterinary nurse in a small local practice. After 12 months she decided she would change courses and began her veterinary science course.

She has a PhD in small ruminant medicine and works part-time in the School. However, her academic duties have been put on hold as she is on maternity leave following the birth of Sylke in October.

Both Jan and Karianne have travelled widely but had never been to Australia before last year. They have worked and holidayed in the USA, UK and western Europe but looked farther afield for the future they wanted for themselves professionally and their family.

Australia fills their criteria for a great lifestyle, and living in Wagga Wagga is a bonus. Close to the high country where they can camp with the family (a motor home was one of their

immediate acquisitions), indulge in their passion for cross-country skiing and be still close enough to enjoy the coast for summer breaks.

Undoubtedly, the challenge of helping in the development of a new veterinary facility was a major factor in their decision to move to the other side of the world, away from family, friends and familiar cultural events. Jan and Karianne are keen for their children to assimilate into Australian life while keeping alive their heritage. At Christmas time, Australian visitors are entertained with the story of Black Peter (with carrots and shoes in the fireplace) and there is always a good assortment of Dutch delicacies on the table - Karianne has found an internet site where she can source authentic Dutch food. Jurre (aged four) has quickly learned to speak English and moves easily between his two languages while Taeke (aged two) and baby Sylke are sure to have a real Aussie twang.

Dutch family and friends have descended on the Lievaarts in great numbers so they have not had a chance to feel homesick. Last Christmas, they escaped the heat by camping in Tasmania but this year they are going to the Netherlands to show off the new baby and enjoy, once again, a cold and white Christmas.



# Student profile: Tim Quast

**Full Name:**

Tim Quast

**Age:**

21

**Home Town:**

Tamworth

**Year of study within the Bachelor of Veterinary Science / Bachelor of Veterinary Biology:**

3rd year

**Why did you choose to study veterinary science at CSU?**

I originally put studying veterinary science to the back of my mind during my final year at school, as I knew the entry marks for the traditional veterinary courses were out of reach. I decided to start a Bachelor of Science / Law at the University of New England but throughout my year at Armidale, I became aware that the CSU course was focused on developing rural students to practise in rural Australia. Knowing this, I went for it.

**Why would you like to be a vet?**

The opportunity to be a professional involved in a rural community was always a big drawcard for me, as well as the chance to have a job that is never routine and gets you out and about. In recent years, I think the role of a veterinarian has changed considerably, due to enhanced economic pressures and changes in farm management. With such a change, the challenge and opportunity for maintaining the importance of the profession in animal production should be rewarding.

**What is your favourite aspect of the Veterinary Science program at CSU?**

The practical experience we develop throughout our course is invaluable: the experience in animal handling and clinical skills at the University, and being out with the vets in our region.

**What are you looking forward to after graduating?**

Apart from finally being able to earn some cash, I am looking forward to the possibility of integrating into a new town and being able to apply all that I have learnt. But I think at first I will be looking forward to graduation itself, as it will be an intense few days leading up to it.

**What inspires you professionally and personally?**

Professionally I am inspired by success. I understand that not every case will be a success, but you can possibly achieve something by handling the situation well and more importantly learning something from it. Of course, good role models within the profession are inspirational. Personally, I am inspired by anybody that gives their all positively.

**What has been a highlight of your course?**

There is not one defining highlight, but the social side of both veterinary science and the Ag College in Wagga Wagga have provided many good times. But away from social activities, attempting to explain how we artificially inseminate turkeys to my interview panel, before I started my time at CSU, was memorable.

**Explain your role in the Veterinary Students' Association (VSA)**

During my first two years of study I was on the VSA. In first year I was one of

the first year representatives on the committee and last year held the position of Vice-President.

**What do you do when you're not studying?**

Work at home and try to have some time off to relax and catch up with family.

**What is your biggest achievement?**

Completing the Hawkesbury Challenge in 2005. It is a kayaking race over 111km through the night. The fact that I completed it with my older brother makes it a somewhat bigger achievement!

**Are you hoping to specialise in a certain area after you graduate?**

At first, the thought of specialising in the poultry industry was never on the cards. Now, I don't think I could rule it out as it is interesting and is an area of increasing growth. Cattle are also a big passion of mine but at this stage I am not really thinking of any specialisation, as there is so much that could change.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

In mixed rural practice in Australia somewhere. Paying off massive debts, but settled down having travelled for a few years with, and away from work.

**What is your ultimate career goal?**

To never truly retire from work and have at least tried to achieve all that I could.



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*Illustration by Jan Austin (Inland by Hand)*  
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