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The Charles Sturt Veterinary Science Foundation would like to acknowledge the support of new and continuing donors to the Veterinary Science program:

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- Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga
- Scott’s Angus
- Talooby Trust
- Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital
The last few months have been important for regional Australia: the first group of Charles Sturt University veterinary graduates have completed their qualification and taken up employment across regional Australia. It is also a proud period for Charles Sturt University, as the program and the success of these students goes to the heart of what this University does.

We sought to build a program to address workforce shortages in rural Australia through graduates with increased expertise in large animals, livestock health, wildlife health and, implicitly, biosecurity.

In doing so, the University did not attempt to crowd the additional expertise into the traditional five-year program, but pioneered a six-year veterinary science program. Other universities are now following our lead.

We would not have reached this point without Emeritus Professor Jim Pratley, who planted the seed for the concept, and Professor Kym Abbott who has built the program from a concept to reality. Both Jim and Kym would acknowledge that we would not be here today without Doug Bryden AM, to whom I pay special tribute for his wise counsel and guidance. Professor Nick Klomp, who followed Jim Pratley as Dean of the Faculty, was unerring in his support of the program.

I am grateful to the staff and, of course, to the students, for they are indeed the essence of the success of this course. We look forward to the program continuing to meet the needs of regional Australia.

“...the success of these students goes to the heart of what this University does.”
First graduates

In this issue of Tails we celebrate the first graduates from the veterinary science program at Charles Sturt University, with a sense that the first stage of our mission is complete. It has been a momentous year since the last issue of Tails. The leading class of students commenced their final year, principally consisting of clinical rotations through veterinary hospitals, clinics, laboratories and other workplaces. The Kay Hull Veterinary Teaching Hospital was completed and formally opened in May.

In July, we conducted final examinations for the class of 2010 and, in the same week, welcomed the team of eight veterinarians comprising the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee (VSAAC) who conducted the first full accreditation inspection of our School.

Accreditation

The accreditation visit was, of course, a very significant event for the School, and the preparation for the visit was intense and demanding. While reports of the accreditation committee visits of 2006 and 2008 had been positive, and short-term accreditation had been secured on each occasion, July 2010 was the first time that the accreditation body could review the entire course and make its final judgement on the quality of the program, and the ability of our graduates to register as veterinary practitioners.

Following the visit, VSAAC recommended to the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council and the Boards in each of the states and territories of Australia and New Zealand that the course be fully accredited. This recommendation was accepted by each jurisdiction by 4 August. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons – the accrediting body for the United Kingdom – also sent an observer to the School but we will have to wait until November to hear if the CSU veterinary course will be approved by that body. The report from VSAAC contained many positive comments for the School, and the School staff were particularly pleased that the mission of the program, and its distinctive characteristics were both recognised and commended. To quote from the report: “...the six-year program, problem based curriculum and strong focus on production animals are unique and important features of the degree. The veterinary profession in rural Australia has embraced the CSU students and finds them committed, capable and well prepared for life in mixed practice”. It is very satisfying to note the effort that our staff have made to develop an innovative and complete veterinary program, designed to provide our graduates with the widest of options for their professional lives, has been so clearly acknowledged and praised by the combined wisdom and experience collected in the accreditation bodies.

Jobs for graduates

The first CSU graduates have now moved into the veterinary workforce. All 30 2010 graduates have secured positions in veterinary practice in rural Australia. The red dots on the map below show the destinations of the first group of graduates.

The statistics are compelling evidence of the interest of rural practitioners in CSU graduates. Six practices employed 12 of the graduates. Ten graduates will be in predominantly dairy cattle practices in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Other graduates are entering small animal practice, mixed practice or equine practice in the same states and in Queensland. Many practitioners were disappointed that they were unable to employ one of the new crop but, of course, another 36 like-minded young veterinarians are on their way for August 2011.
In summary, the course has been an outstanding success in achieving its first goal of producing veterinary practitioners with the commitment to enter rural veterinary practice. This outcome has been the result of dedication from the staff of the School who have kept alive the original vision for the course, first developed by Professor Jim Pratley, Dr Douglas Bryden, Mr Peter Cregan, Dr Heidi Austin, Dr Jenny Hyams and the Interim Curriculum Committee of 2004. The assistance of many veterinary practitioners, both local to Wagga Wagga and across Australia, has been critical to the excellent preparation of students for post-graduate life.

The students and staff of the School gratefully acknowledge the importance of the profession’s involvement in the program. I also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of many donors and financial supporters of the course, the facilities, and the students through scholarships. This support has, in some instances, allowed a student to continue the course without interruption, or for infrastructure developments to proceed without delay or without compromise on facility.

Head of School stepping down

This is my last contribution to Tails as Head of School. After six years leading the program I will step down at the end of November this year. I am personally very grateful for the opportunity to have been involved in developing this School, and to have come to know the extraordinary academic, administrative and technical staff who have given so much of their time to the task. The academic staff in the School include a number of exceptional future leaders and I know I leave the leadership of the course in good hands.

The CSU veterinary program will move progressively into a consolidation phase and, under new leadership, will continue to mature and strengthen into a truly outstanding veterinary course. I trust that you, like me, will continue to watch its development with great interest and affection.

Vice-Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence

**Leadership Excellence**
Dr Jan Lievaart

**Research Excellence**
Mr David McGill

**Senior Leadership Excellence**
Professor Kym Abbott, whose citation reads in part: “Measured by a long list of achievements, Professor Abbott has an ability to inspire staff and students. His leadership over a sustained period at CSU has resulted in many significant outcomes for the University, making him one of CSU’s finest leaders.”
The Class of 2010 have completed almost six years of training at Charles Sturt University – the first group of students to undertake the veterinary science program at Wagga Wagga.

Thirty students completed the program and have been offered employment in rural veterinary practices in four states; New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.

The completion of their studies was marked with a Commemoration Day on 6 August.

The day began with a Ceremony at the Riverina Playhouse in Wagga Wagga with Master of Ceremonies Professor Kym Abbott welcoming to the stage Chancellor Lawrie Willett AO, Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Goulter, Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW President Dr Ruth Thompson, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Professor Nick Klomp, and special guests Dr Doug Bryden AM and Dr Heidi Austin, who gave the keynote address.

The Veterinary Science lapel pins were designed to mark the occasion and were presented by Dr Doug Bryden. At the time of the presentation Professor Abbott announced the students who had gained Honours during the course. The students who received Honours First Class are: Ashleigh Smith, Greg Dale, Bruno Ros, Andrew Hancock, Kelly Plozza, Andrew Lamont, Matt Muir, Emma Packer and Tara Mills. The students who gained Honours Class 2 (Division 1) are: Bec Robson, Coco Willsallen, Rosie Harvey and Jess Cooke.

Following the presentation to the students, Dr Bryden was presented with a lapel pin by Bruno Ros, making Dr Bryden an honorary member of the Class of 2010.

The students remained on stage facing the audience and recited the Veterinarians’ Oath, led by the President of the NSW Veterinary Practitioners Board, Dr Ruth Thompson.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Heidi Austin (pictured above) who travelled from Armidale for the ceremony. Dr Austin was one of the veterinarians who was instrumental in setting up the course in the early years. She spoke to the students about confidence and competence with amusing anecdotes and some home truths from her own experiences. Dr Austin is now employed with the University of New England.

Graduand Scott Ison thanked her on behalf of the students. Dr Austin and Dr Thompson were thanked by students Tara Mills and Meika Croker with bouquets of flowers beautifully arranged by Mrs Annette Lamont, mother of graduand Andrew Lamont.
Class of 2010 Commemoration Ceremony

Prize winners
The special interest groups of the Australian Veterinary Association generously donated textbooks that were presented to the top students in their various disciplines.

Meika Croker won the Australian Sheep Veterinarians prize, presented by Dr Mark Carter
Sean McGrath won the Australian Cattle Veterinarians prize, presented by Dr Scott Parry
Greg Dale won the Australasian Poultry Veterinarians prize, presented by Dr Peter Groves
Matt Muir won the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association prize, presented by Dr Tara Cashman
Al Grant won the Equine Veterinarians Australia prize, presented by Dr Ken Jacobs
Sarah McGrath won the Ross & Linden Cutler Pig Medicine prize, presented by Professor Nick Klomp
Matt Petersen won the Panaquatic Fish Diseases prize, donated by Dr Paul Hardy-Smith, presented by Professor Nick Klomp
Greg Dale won the John Glastonbury Pathology prize, presented by Associate Professor John Glastonbury
Coco Willsallen won the Centre for Veterinary Education prize, presented by Dr Amanda Craig.

Family connections
Dr David Petersen and his family were at the Dinner to celebrate the success of his son Matt. Dr Petersen was in the first group of veterinary students that graduated from Murdoch University in 1975. Now Matt is in the first group to graduate from Charles Sturt University.

Dr Bryan Hilbert (pictured with David and Matt) taught at both schools and taught both veterinarians.

Another father/son combination present on the evening was Dr Kevin McGrath from Beachport in South Australia and his son Sean from the graduating class. Sean’s brother Malcolm is presently in Year 5 of the veterinary science course.

Alumni website
Scott Norman is busily setting up the Alumni website so we can keep in touch with our new graduates as they start work around the country. Go to: www.csu.edu.au/vet

Commemoration dinner
Celebrations continued in the evening with the Commemoration Dinner held at the Convention Centre at Charles Sturt University. Master of Ceremonies Professor Kym Abbott welcomed a dining room packed with students and their families and friends, School staff and special guests.

Jenny Hyams proposed a toast to the students and Sarah McGrath responded on behalf of her classmates.

VSA Certificates of Achievement
The Veterinary Students Association accepted nominations and collected votes from staff and students of the School to award prizes and certificates to students who had made a significant contribution to the Association and had been involved in School and community activities. The top award, The VSA Community Spirit Award, went to joint winners Sarah McGrath and Richard Sanders (cover photograph).
Honours in veterinary science (BVSc (Hons)) is offered to students entering Year 5 of the course and is research based. For entry into the program, students need to achieve a Grade Point Average (GPA) above 5 (Credit average) in Years 2, 3 and 4 of the course and be accepted for a project.

Assessment of the project is based on a combination of the dissertation and a presentation. Administration of the Honours process is governed by a committee of the Faculty. Four of the 10 projects are described below:

### Bruno Ros, supervised by Dr Scott Norman

**Topic: Concentration of oxytetracycline in serum and endometrium after intrauterine infusion in the mare.**

Endometritis causes considerable reproductive loss in brood mares by inducing abnormalities of the oestrous cycle; reducing the likelihood of fertilisation and attachment; and creating a uterine environment that is not compatible with early pregnancy maintenance.

Diagnosis of endometritis is based on a combination of a failure to conceive; clinical signs, which may include vaginal discharge; detection of uterine fluid by per rectal ultrasonography during oestrus; presence of predisposing anatomical conformation; and by isolation of aetiological organism in association with polymorphonuclear neutrophils from the mare’s uterus.

Commonly used treatments have included uterine lavage with saline; administration of ecbolic drugs such as oxytocin or prostaglandin; administration of numerous antibiotics, both systemically and locally by intrauterine infusion; and intrauterine administration of plasma and colostrum.

There are few published data regarding the efficacy and pharmacokinetics of most drugs used to treat endometritis. One antibiotic that is not commonly used in mares is oxytetracycline (OTC). The reason for this reluctance of veterinarians to use OTC seems to be due to anecdotal evidence suggesting OTC causes irritation and potential long-term damage to the endometrium. There is also a lack of data describing the pharmacokinetics of intrauterine administration of OTC in the mare. Thus, it is not known if intrauterine administration of OTC achieves adequate concentrations in the endometrium to be effective against target bacteria.

This study was designed to develop a model for investigating the pharmacokinetics of antibiotics in the mare after intrauterine infusion using OTC as the test drug.

The results of this study demonstrate that OTC was present in endometrium above MIC for at least eight hours, and there was negligible systemic absorption. The concentrations detected in endometrium at both three and eight hours post-infusion were greater than the reported MIC of the four common bacterial pathogens causing endometritis in mares. This study supports that intrauterine infusion of OTC may be an appropriate therapeutic option for the treatment of equine endometritis.

### Andrew Hancock, supervised by Dr Jan Lievaart

**Topic: Effects of weather and heat stress prevention on herd somatic cell count on New South Wales dairy farms.**

There has been a body of literature examining the effect of season and heat stress on somatic cell count (SCC), and there have been numerous discrepancies in the results of this work. So far no research has been performed in the Australian environment. Weather data for the period 2000-2009 inclusive were obtained from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and were matched to herd recording data from 469 New South Wales (NSW) dairy farms for the same period.

In addition to the statistical analyses performed on these data, a questionnaire was sent to these farms (112 were completed) regarding heat stress prevention methods.

The aims were to examine the associations between weather and SCC data, and between heat stress prevention methods and SCC. Humidity was found to be positively correlated with average herd SCC (HSCC) when corrected for stage of lactation and milk production using a linear regression model.

When including weather, test-day, and management variables into a multivariate logistic regression model the following management practices were associated with a HSCC<200,000 cells/ml: the use of shade in the holding pen; fans and sprinklers in the milking shed; increasing feeding frequency; feeding cows during cooler periods; and implementing cooling procedures at night. The use of sprinklers in the holding pen, soaking cows with water in the holding pen or milking shed, altering ration to prevent heat stress, and selection for heat tolerance were all management practices associated with a HSCC≥200,000 cells/ml.

It is apparent from these findings that humidity is probably the most important contributor to heat stress, and heat stress is associated with an increased SCC. Management practices that reinforce or counteract the effects of humidity work to increase or decrease SCC respectively.

The Australian dairy industry would benefit from further education programs regarding the prevention of heat stress based on these findings.
Rosie Harvey, supervised by Dr Helen McGregor

**Topic:** A pilot survey investigating the seroprevalence of antibodies against *Toxoplasma gondii* and risk factors for transmission of *T gondii* to sheep in the Tumbarumba shire of NSW.

The survey, conducted in August and September 2009, tested a total of 489 sheep and 12 cats on 10 properties for antibodies against *T gondii* using a commercial enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) kit (ID Screen, Toxoplasmosis Indirect®).

Mean seroprevalence of antibodies against *T gondii* in the animals tested was 6.7% in sheep and 33% in cats. The seroprevalence in sheep flocks ranged between zero and 36%.

Strong trends were identified for association between risk factors and seroprevalence. No risk factor tested in the survey had a statistically significant association with the seroprevalence of antibodies against *T gondii* in sheep.

Given the range of seroprevalence and the fact that a high seroprevalence was detected in this region in both sheep and cats, further work is warranted to determine the economic importance of this parasite and further clarify primary risk factors for transmission under Australian conditions.

Amanda Lee Charman
Final year clinical training in beef cattle medicine and production is undertaken at five mixed practices in regional NSW: Holbrook Veterinary Clinic; Coonamble Veterinary Surgery; Nandewar Veterinary Services – Barraba; Coolah Veterinary Clinic and Quirindi Veterinary Clinic.

During their three-week block at these practices, students are involved in general pastoral veterinary work with particular focus on beef herd health and individual animal services. They also get significant exposure to routine sheep, equine and small animal work in the pastoral environment.

The staff of the five practices have been very impressed with the quality of CSU students and their excellent temperament for work and life in the bush.

In order to further encourage young graduates to pursue a career in pastoral veterinary practice, the group of five practices has inaugurated an annual award, the ‘Golden Hobbles’. This award will be made to the final year student or students displaying exceptional aptitude and passion for beef practice whilst on rotation and who demonstrate ongoing commitment to the pastoral industries by moving on to a job in the sector.

Each of the five practices nominated two candidates for the award and this list was whittled down to two highly deserving winners for 2010. The prize is a traditional Australian stockman’s ‘dinner time hobble belt’ individually handmade by Scott Parry.

The first Golden Hobbles were presented to (Holbrook placement) Camille Addison and (Coonamble placement) Scott Ison by Coonamble principal veterinarian Scott Parry (pictured).

The five beef cattle teaching practices would like to thank CSU staff and students for the opportunity to be involved in this exciting teaching program and wish Camille, Scott and all of the class of 2010 the very best in their veterinary careers.

“The staff of the five practices have been very impressed with the quality of CSU students.”
Jill Groat wins Doug Ross Overseas Travel and Study Award

Jill, a Year 5 student, has taken out the Doug Ross Overseas Travel and Study Award. The Award, supported by Australian Pork Limited and donations to a trust fund set up to honour the late Doug Ross, encourages young veterinarians or undergraduates with an interest in pigs. The award recognises the contribution Doug Ross made to the Australian pig industry. Doug was a veterinarian who was passionately involved in the pig industry and was a mentor to many people.

Jill first became interested in pig production following student practical work on a pig farm in the Young district. “I’m originally from an extensive farming background with sheep and cattle and found working with pigs really challenging and rewarding” she said. Jill was awarded an all expenses paid trip to Vancouver, Canada, to attend this year’s International Pig Veterinary Society Congress in July and the APV satellite conference immediately before that.

Dr Ross Cutler, speaking on behalf of the judges, said: “This is the first time that the Award has been made to a student. The judges hope that the experience the Award brings will attract another bright young veterinarian to the field of pig medicine.”

Professional Experience Scholarship Winners – Years 4 and 5

Moruya Veterinary Hospital Scholarship was awarded to Michaela Woolford

Piper Street Veterinary Clinic Scholarships were awarded to Glen Borrowdale and Ellen Litchfield

These Scholarships were presented by Associate Professor John Glastonbury

Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga Scholarship was awarded to Shahid Khalfan presented by Professor Peter Chenoweth, a member of the Rotary Club

Coopers Animal Health Scholarships were awarded to Leigh Reichard, Ayla Hunt, Ian Croft, Vanessa Buchholz, Carla Goldman, Claire Petterson, Katherine Snell, Natalie Saurine, Trystan Keylock and Sarah Sutherland. They were presented by Coopers representative Dr Jane Morrison

Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital Small Animal Surgery Scholarship was awarded for the first time to Felicity Wills and presented by the Hospital’s principal veterinarian Dr David Golland (pictured below).

WP & AG Holmesby Overseas Practice Scholarship was awarded to Mal McGrath and presented by their daughter Lesley Abbott

Pfizer Animal Health Scholarships were awarded to Kate Burnheim and Rhys Duncan and presented by Pfizer veterinarian Dr Liz Patrick

Pfizer Year 5 Project Prize was won jointly by Bryce Mooring and Rhys Duncan

Australian Research Council Award to Associate Professor Shane Raidal

In 2009 Shane Raidal was awarded a Discovery Award to fund a project due to start this year.

This project will generate fundamental new knowledge into the pathogenesis of persistent, chronic viral diseases in a wide range of animal hosts.

Beak and feather disease virus is listed as a Key Threatening Process under the Endangered Species Protection Act (1992) to at least 16 endangered Australian bird species.

Very little is known about the host virus interactions that occur during the early stages of infection or why some birds recover yet others develop full-blown disease.

This project will provide new knowledge that can be used to counteract its effects on current and future endangered species recovery program.

Dr Raidal has two PhD students; Ian Patterson, who is working on molecular aspects of avian circoviruses, and Andrew Peters, part of whose project will be looking into pigeon circoviruses.
Helping out at the Royal Easter Show

Veterinary science and animal science students volunteered their time again this year at the Royal Easter Show helping in areas such as the intensive preparation of cattle before judging and drug testing, in the dairy with milking, in the barns with mastitis treatments, cleaning, and on horseback in the ring.

Pictured in the milking parlour are Cassie McDonald, who has been working at the Royal since she was 12, and Amy Dutton. The cows were milked at 4am each day then they were ‘rostered’ to be milked each hour to show the public what it is like to be a dairy farmer.

Students accompanied Dr Hadley Willsallen from CSU, who was kept busy as a Drug Testing Steward, and Dr Mark Booth from the Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital on his rounds of the barns with consultations and treatments on cattle, pigs, sheep and alpacas including animals in the isolation hospital.

The Australian Intercollegiate Meat Judging Competition 2010

Fifteen students from agricultural, animal and veterinary sciences went to UNE Armidale in June for the six-day competition under the leadership of Professor Peter Wynn and new team leader Tony Hobbs.

Following lectures and practical sessions, students judged two carcass classes, pricing evaluation, eating quality evaluation, primal ID and evaluation classes.

The top 15 students gave an oral presentation and, out of the 10 finalists, three were from Charles Sturt University – Jessica Loughland, who won the Founder’s Buckle, Andrew Gillett and Year 4 veterinary science student Claire Petterson (pictured). These students went to Brisbane for an intensive week of training following which Claire and Jessica were selected to travel to the USA in January to participate in a 22-day meat judging tour with students from other Australian universities.

In the teams competition, the CSU team finished a close second to Murdoch University. This is the first time in four years that a team from Australia has won.

Year 1 – Class of 2015

We welcomed 70 students into the new Class of 2015 in February this year.

They have quickly settled into their busy round of lectures and practical classes.

A very successful Parents and Partners Dinner was held in April with many of the School staff attending to meet the families of the students.

Stethoscope donation

We are grateful for the cooperation of Peter Darge at Braun Australia who organised the generous donation of stethoscopes for all the students, which were immediately put to good use in the cat handling class. (Pictured Scott Binks and Tom Wright with Custard the cat).

Year 5 - Class of 2011

Problem based learning (PBL) sessions themed The Big Picture: Putting It All Together wound up with role plays and a debate run by the students.

The role play was made more interesting with the appearance of Ally Austin’s pet snake Pretzel (left) who is reputed to have a taste for ferrets who wander into her territory.

The debate this year was under the ‘control’ of Speaker/President Dr John Boulton.
Phase 3 - Class of 2011

In second session Year 5 students entered Phase 3 of the veterinary science program and will complete their veterinary science studies with final examinations in the middle of 2011. They began Phase 3 with the subject Transition to Practice coordinated by Dr Eric Allan who organised a variety of speakers to present subjects previously identified as critical to success in veterinary practice. Subjects include business skills, veterinary jurisprudence and ethical behaviour, life skills, advanced communication skills and research skills.

Pictured are veterinarians from local practices who spoke to the students on life in a veterinary practice focussing on the attitude and commitment necessary to cope with the first few years in practice: Brian Munro from Leeton, Justin Clancy from Albury, Jana Stevenson from Albury, Robert Willis from Albury, Kerry Fraser and Andrew Perry from Kyabram, and Mark Hawker from Young.

The School is indebted to veterinary practitioners who are prepared to travel great distances and spend time talking to the students who one day will be working at and running rural practices such as theirs.

The students were not only in the audience in many sessions but had hands-on experiences improving their driving skills and firearm skills – both essential for professional life in rural veterinary practice.

Dr Fred Morley

A new consulting, teaching and research unit named for the late Dr Fred Morley, was opened by Mrs Carmel Morley (pictured left, with son Andrew Morley) during the Beef and Sheep Field Days at CSU in August.

Kay Hull Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Students accommodation and seminar room

Year 5 students on rotation through the hospital are accommodated in the new student apartment attached to the hospital. The two bedroom apartment has a fully equipped kitchen and lounge area.

Three students at a time are required to live in the apartment for three weeks and attend to animals that are housed overnight in the hospital in intensive care or animals that are admitted during the night and at weekends.

The students are supervised by veterinarians Martin Combs, Jane Lord and Peter Young who conduct daily rounds and tutorials in the seminar room.

Donation of books

The seminar room has a library of new books covering all aspects of small animal medicine, surgery, pharmacology and radiography donated generously by Mars Petcare and the Veterinary Science Foundation.

The photo shows Dr Martin Combs and Dr Jane Lord with Year 5 students Tom Prichard and Erin Davis during a tutorial session in the seminar room.
Adjunct academic staff

The veterinary science course started with a meagre staff of four veterinarians – Kym Abbott, Heidi Austin, Jenny Hyams and John Glastonbury. From these humble beginnings in 2005 the numbers of academic staff have increased to 60, with many veterinarians and scientists joining the team from around Australia and across the world. Even with this impressive growth there has been room for more expertise, and we have been privileged to have world renowned specialists in many fields come to the School to offer their help through lectures and practical sessions.

Ross Cutler teaches students about pigs. He is on campus regularly during first session to teach a course in intensive animal production and returns later in the year to contribute to subjects in the first, second and third years of the course. Ross is the principal of his micro consulting company in Ocean Grove, Victoria. His work involves teaching at the CSU and University of Melbourne vet schools, working with pig producers, managing research projects for the Pork CRC, assisting a multinational pharmaceutical company with technical matters relevant to pigs, and reviewing for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

Over the past five years Ross has been involved with international food security projects for the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Last year he visited Timor Leste on three occasions to investigate better ways to produce pigs.

Paul Hardy-Smith teaches students about fish. Paul is the Director of Panaquatic Health Solutions. He works in Australia, Canada, the US and a number of Asian countries including Thailand, China and Malaysia. Paul is an aquaculture and aquatic animal health consultant for national and local governments, multinational companies and privately owned fish farming enterprises.

From 1999 to 2003 Paul was production veterinarian for Heritage Salmon in Canada. Heritage Salmon produced around 15,000 tonnes of salmon annually.

Prior to this position Paul worked for the state government of Tamania focusing on the diagnostics, treatments and development of aquaculture regulations.

He had input also at a federal level in developing the National Exotic Disease policy and import/export guidelines.

Penny Little provided advice and guidance on setting up the Problem Based Learning program with coordinator Jenny Hyams.

Her passion for teaching and learning led her through a long and full career in secondary schools as a science teacher, then moving into higher education. Her focus was on the act of teaching and the role and responsibility of the teacher to engage the learner.

This interest arose out of early experiences in trying to engage disinterested and unmotivated adolescent girls in science. It developed into a lifelong commitment to making education relevant and engaging for the learner. It was at the University of Western Sydney in 1987 and later at the University of Newcastle until 2002, that she had the opportunity to establish PROBLARC, (Problem Based Learning Assessment and Research Centre), which became internationally recognised as a world leader in problem based learning. As Director and consultant she had the opportunity to work with academics from many institutions and disciplines as far afield as Chile, Latvia, United Kingdom, South Africa and many Asian countries.

Peter Groves teaches students about poultry. Following graduation from the University of Sydney, Peter worked in small animal and equine veterinary practice before joining Pfizer Agricare as a Veterinary Research Officer. He continued to work in the commercial environment with poultry research, veterinary and technical services managerial roles with Elanco Products, Ingham’s Enterprises and Baiada Poultry.

Currently Peter is Director of Zootechny Pty Ltd and consultant in poultry health. He completed his PhD at the University of Sydney in 2000 with a project on the epidemiology of the broiler ascites syndrome.

Peter’s research interests include epidemiological approaches to poultry disease management, with particular interests in broiler ascites syndrome, coccidiosis, Mareks’ disease and Salmonella. He is currently part of a Poultry CRC research team studying Marek’s Disease in broilers.

Peter is currently pursuing studies on the effects of an inactivated tri-valent salmonella vaccine in broiler breeders to decrease the overall prevalence of Salmonella on poultry meat.
Staff profile
Shokoofeh Shamsi

Shokoofeh came to us this year from RMIT in Melbourne to employment as a lecturer in veterinary parasitology. Her particular interest is in parasites of aquatic animals.

Shokoofeh’s first undergraduate degree was awarded by the University of Tehran in 1993 in Animal Science. Immediately after graduation she was offered a job as a researcher in the department of aquatic animal health in the Iranian Fisheries Research Organisation. Then in 1997, she scored the highest marks in the national entry exam for Masters in Medical Parasitology. Shokoofeh was judged the most outstanding student of the year in 2000 for a Masters degree in the Tehran University of Medical Sciences. After completing her Masters she was promoted to the position of Director of the Division of Freshwater and Marine Fish Health and Diseases.

Shokoofeh was born in Sari - a city on the south coast of the Caspian Sea. She moved to Tehran to go to university and, in her last year, met her future husband who was a Masters student in the Faculty of Natural Resources in the same university. They married in 1993.

Her husband Afshin is a lecturer in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Tehran. He had the opportunity to get a scholarship from the Iranian Ministry of Science and that is how they came to Australia in February 2002. Her daughter Niyousha was 26 days old and the youngest passenger in the plane! She grew up here, has an Australian accent and loves Vegemite! Niyousha delights in correcting her mother’s English.

Shokoofeh was awarded an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship and Melbourne International Research Scholarship from the University of Melbourne in 2003 to do a PhD with Professor Ian Beveridge on genetic characterisation of anisakid nematodes which infect a broad range of aquatic animals. After completing her PhD in 2007 she did a post doctorate at RMIT.

How did Shokoofeh get here to Wagga? She saw the job advertised at a conference held by the Australian Society for Parasitology in Sydney. There she met Terry Spithill and Tiggy Grillo who was employed in this job. She decided to apply for the position even though she did not know where Wagga was!

Shokoofeh says that becoming a lecturer in Parasitology is a dream of a lifetime. She enjoys interacting with the students and partaking in research on aquatic animal parasites.

She had heard that the veterinary science course was new and that the School was successfully attracting high profile academics from around the world as well as enthusiastic students who were keen to work in rural areas. She also knew about the plans for development of the course and is excited to be part of it. Even though she did not teach the first CSU graduates she was proud to see them graduate with such confidence and so ready to fly away.

What does she hope for the future? Shokoofeh wants to be able to get funding for research projects that will provide opportunities for interested animal science and veterinary science students to get more involved in research in aquatic animal health.
Welcome to new staff

Rebecca Doyle, Lecturer in Animal Physiology

Rebecca has joined us from the University of New England where she began her PhD research into the emotions and stress physiology of sheep in response to physical and neuroendocrine manipulation. She is in the final stages of writing up her thesis.

Her background includes an Honours degree in Animal and Veterinary Bioscience from the University of Sydney majoring in animal production. Her research as part of her Honours focussed on the GH/IGF axis in juvenile crocodiles.

Rebecca has experience conducting assays measuring reproductive hormones in varieties of species at Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo.

She has co-supervised honours students and looks forward to being involved in the undergraduate training here at CSU.

Hugh Kerr-Grant, Enterprise Manager

Hugh joined the school in April 2010 in the role of Enterprise Manager, with responsibility for the overall business operation of the Clinical Centre, Diagnostic Laboratory and Teaching Hospital.

He has many years experience in business management having held a variety of positions in management, human resources and sales. These roles have encompassed responsibility for businesses with a turnover to $20 million (1987) and up to 50 staff.

Hugh’s most recent positions have been as the Operations Manager for a business in the injury management/occupational health field that provided services in Medical, Physiotherapy, Occupational Rehabilitation, Training (RTO status), Psychology and OHS Consultation. He has held the position of Operations Manager, Rivservices at the Wagga Wagga Campus of CSU.Hugh is married to Meryl and has two sons, Gareth and Allan, and grandson Hamish.

Susan Armstrong, Equine Medicine Resident

Susan joined us recently from Fethard Equine Hospital in Coolmore, Ireland where she completed an 18-month internship in equine medicine and surgery.

She holds undergraduate and Masters degrees from the University of Glasgow. To finance her way through her veterinary studies she took a position as Pharmaceutical Project Coordinator for Chiesi Healthcare with the National Health Service in the UK.

Her internship in Ireland was a busy one where she was exposed to a caseload in excess of 2,500 per year.

Her aim is to complete a PhD under the supervision of the equine specialists at the Veterinary Clinical Centre and gain Equine Medicine Fellowship.

John Boulton, Associate Professor in Veterinary Pathology

John graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science from Sydney University, undertook graduate training in veterinary pathology at Ontario Veterinary College, and gained membership of the ACVSc in pathobiology.

He is a registered veterinary practitioner and, until the recent laboratory closures, was a NATA-approved signatory in the field of veterinary testing. He was Laboratory Leader at NSW DPI’s (now closed) Regional Veterinary Laboratory at Orange. Previously, John was veterinary pathologist at RVL at Wollongbar and Officer-in-Charge there and at its RVL at EMAL Menangle. He held various other leadership positions with the Department, particularly in emergency animal disease control.

He feels that using his knowledge and skills to help develop the next generations of veterinarians, particularly those that might serve the livestock industries, is a great thing to do.
Jo Belling, School Receptionist and Travel Planner

The smiling friendly face seen first by the public in the foyer of the School is that of Jo Belling.

As well as working on the busy front desk, Jo coordinates travel arrangements for the staff and undertakes various other administrative duties.

She has been with the School since October last year, having worked previously in the education sector and driving Illabo School’s bus for over 13 years. She is working full-time for the first time in many years, having stayed at home to help husband Robbie and raise three children, Erin, Adam and Jade.

Col Scrivener, Lecturer in Ruminant Health

Col has recently joined us after a long and varied career in ruminant health medicine. He graduated in 1980 from the University of Queensland and had postgraduate training at the Mackinnon Project at Melbourne University under the supervision of Fred Morley and Andrew Vizard.

Following graduation, Col went to Alice Springs working on the BTEC scheme throughout the Northern Territory and Queensland. Then it was back to Forbes to start a new veterinary practice with the aim of developing a livestock health and production practice, though the first years were filled with horses, small animals and greyhounds. The practice eventually expanded into health and management with four veterinarians among the 50 staff. In 1992, Col joined the Mackinnon Project, University of Melbourne as well as the Equine Emergency Unit.

Another move in 2003 took the family to Armidale and Mike Stephens & Associates, training sheep producers and managing farming businesses as well. His busy professional life saw him project manage farmer groups with AWI in sheep and wool training followed by integrated pasture management research and demonstration on farms locally in New England and nationally.

Craig McConnel, Lecturer in Ruminant Health

I was raised on a farm in Idaho, US, where we primarily raised wheat, lucerne, and dairy heifers. Although I eventually chose not to farm, this upbringing certainly influenced my choice of a career and led me to obtain a veterinary degree from Washington State University.

Following veterinary school I ended up at the University of Sydney where I completed a Master of Veterinary Clinical Studies investigating Moraxella bovis strains present in Australia. That research piqued my interest in epidemiologic studies and led me to pursue a PhD at Colorado State University where I studied the epidemiology of adult dairy cow mortality on intensive Colorado dairies.

While in Colorado I also worked in private practice with a team specifically focused on dairy reproduction. I arrived at Charles Sturt University in July, 2010 and am looking forward to continuing to explore areas of interest related to dairy health and welfare, reproduction, and personnel training.

Christie Kozlik, Office Manager

I grew up in Wagga Wagga and spent many of my school holidays on family properties.

I studied Business at Monash and then left Australia to travel overseas. I stayed overseas for a number of years and travelled/lived in a number of countries. I met my Canadian husband, Henri, while I was living in Paris and we married in Australia.

We have a daughter, Juliette and two dogs, Charlie and Duke. I have worked in a number of administration roles in global companies. I have always been fortunate to work with fabulous people who have taught me a lot.

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Vetwrap

The Vetwrap tradition continues with another great performance by this year’s Class of 2011 (Year 5) students heralding the end of their Transition to Practice program.

Joyes Hall was packed with students and their families, staff and supporters to enjoy a night of fun with students singing, dancing, reciting poetry and playing piano and guitar.

Control of the night was in the hands of Masters of Ceremony Owen McClure and Tom Prichard, who also featured in one of the skits.

Nikki Burns was in charge of choreography as well as taking the lead in a skit aimed at the character traits of Rev Dr Leigh Ladd. This was followed by a real treat when Leigh sang, in his inimitable style, about the necessities of eating a sausage roll or two.

Chris Petzel was a target once again on stage (portrayed by Tristan Robinson) and on video (by Steph Bullen) demonstrating how to catch a lame cow in a paddock.

Other staff were targeted, with Kym Abbott being subjected to a lap dance by Amy Dutton dressed as a dairy cow; and lecturer Kapil Chousalkar and student Cam Hendricks swapping identities and almost fooling the audience.

At the end of the night the MCs asked the staff present to stand while they were thanked by the students for their hard work, commitment and their efforts in obtaining accreditation for the veterinary science course in July.
Tales from the tearoom

Vale ‘Toby’

Sadly, Brian Alston’s best mate Toby died recently. Toby was well known to everyone at the School and he will be sadly missed.

Constantly at Brian’s beck and call he shepherded sheep and students alike through many practical sessions and stoically rode on the back of Brian’s ute through all weathers.

Before his untimely passing he was instrumental in the training of his protégée, Belladonna, who will continue Toby’s excellent work around the School.

Births

Gemma Ayton was born in February to Michelle and Chris Ayton

Patrick Robert McGrath born in March to Sarah and Sean McGrath (Class of 2010)

Abigail Combs was born in April to Martin and Heidi Combs

Dhaiya Chousalkar was born in April to Kapil and Leena Chousalkar

Weddings

Bryden Krebs (Class of 2013) married Sarah Jeffers (Year 3 Equine Science) in December 2009

Joelle Russell (Class of 2014) married Peter Tiffin in March 2010

Kristie Hann, technical officer in the VDL, married Shane Manning in March 2010. Photo by JLB

Liz Coghlan & Andy Hancock (Class of 2010) became engaged in their final year

Goodbye and Thank You

John Coles left the academic life to return to veterinary practice at Moorang Veterinary Clinic

Fiona Schneider has left us recently after completing her postgraduate studies

Helen McGregor is having a career move from teaching to District Veterinarian in the Hume LHPA area

Terry Spithill is leaving us at the end of the year to join the staff at La Trobe University