New facility provides bright future for the Hospital and College

The University of Georgia Veterinary Teaching Hospital is up and running at its new, state-of-the-art facility, located at 2200 College Station Road.

Inside the Hospital, you’ll find a thoughtfully designed environment centered on the patient. It houses the latest technology, advanced diagnostics and dedicated treatment spaces for large and small animals.

The Hospital is part of the new UGA Veterinary Medical Center, which also includes an education building for teaching third-year veterinary students. The Center encompasses just over 300,000 gross square feet and was built to enable the College of Veterinary Medicine to better meet its students’ educational needs and its current and future patient care demands.

“We have been working toward this for a long time,” said Dr. Sheila W. Allen, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. “We are so thankful to UGA, the Board of Regents, Governors Perdue and Deal, the state legislature, the Georgia taxpayers and our donors for their support of this project. Veterinary medical education in Georgia will be well-served through these new facilities for many years to come.”

Story continued on page 5.
Advanced radiation therapy now available

When the UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital moved into its new facility, it upgraded its linear accelerator to one of the most advanced models available, the Trilogy® system, putting UGA on the leading edge of veterinary radiation therapy nationwide.

One of the main advantages of this machine is its ability to deliver radiation beams to a tumor with significantly increased accuracy, sparing more of the surrounding normal tissue. This results in decreased side effects in a significant proportion of our patients.

This accuracy also allows us to offer stereotactic radiation therapy (SRT) for the treatment of certain types of tumors, such as nasal, brain and spinal tumors. SRT is different from traditional radiation therapy in that a higher dose of radiation can be used. As a result, the number of radiation treatments needed decreases (for example, from 20 treatments to one to five treatments). This is especially advantageous for veterinary patients, since they require general anesthesia for each radiation therapy session.

Our radiation oncology service, lead by Dr. Koichi Nagata, recently completed its first case using SRT, placing UGA among an elite group of veterinary hospitals currently offering this treatment option.

The new linear accelerator also allows the Hospital to treat more types of tumors than before. This may potentially include lung tumors and liver tumors. Also, bone tumors, soft tissue sarcomas, mast cell tumors and urogenital tumors, such as bladder/prostate tumors, can be treated with improved effectiveness.

Supporting Georgia’s agriculture industry one herd at a time

With Georgia being home to Atlanta, several fortune 500 companies and an expanding movie business, some may not realize that agriculture is the state’s number one industry.

This includes the production of nearly 1.7 billion pounds of milk a year and the management of 1 million beef cattle. In fact, the dairy and beef industries combined have the second highest commodity value in Georgia with total farm gate values exceeding $1.5 billion.

Helping to safeguard these important commodities is the goal of the production medicine team at the UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

This service travels to dairy and beef operations throughout the state and works closely with producers and their veterinarians to improve herd health. They also offer consulting services throughout the Southeast.

"Herd health is an essential component to the success of any dairy or beef cattle operation," said one of the service’s veterinarians, Dr. Brent C. Credille, who specializes in large animal internal medicine and beef production medicine. “This ranges from any obvious illnesses in the herd to how well they are performing as a group. You can’t just look at one cow. You have to know how to evaluate the whole herd and make recommendations for improvement based on that.”

These recommendations not only help the owner’s operation to be more profitable in the long run, but they also help ensure the quality and safety of the final product—our food.

“We tend to take a fairly holistic approach,” Credille said. "We look at management practices, nutrition, the environment and genetics when trying to improve the quality of a herd rather than just relying on medical options.”

Their services include bull breeding soundness exams, evaluating herd management practices, reproductive evaluations, herd outbreak investigations, milk quality testing, and herd improvement strategies, to name a few. For more information, to make a referral, or to set up an appointment, call 706.542.3223.

Clinician named to international task force

An international group of veterinary neurology clinicians and neuroscientists have come together to form the International Veterinary Epilepsy Task Force and to formally agree on key aspects of diagnosing, treating and researching canine and feline epilepsy. The 26-member collaboration includes four experts representing institutions in the United States, including Dr. Simon R. Platt, a professor of neurology and neurosurgery at the UGA College of Veterinary Medicine. Learn more at: vet.uga.edu/hospital/services/neurology_neurosurgery/

Members of the Hospital’s production medicine team check on a herd of dairy cattle. Photos by Whitney Mathisen.

Dr. Koichi Nagata, who oversees the radiation oncology service, prepares to treat a brain tumor in Stitch Witt using the Hospital’s new linear accelerator. Photo by Christopher B. Herron.

*Statistics from the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences’s 2014 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report.

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Meet our 2015-2016 interns and residents

The Hospital welcomed more than 25 new residents and interns this summer. These talented doctors play an important role in our patient care. Here is a composite of all residents and interns for the 2015 to 2016 academic year for your reference.

New facility continued from cover

The previous Hospital, which opened in 1979, handled more than 25,000 visits per year in one of the smallest veterinary teaching hospitals in the U.S. The new Hospital is more than double the size of the old facility and is outfitted with top-of-the-line equipment and improved functionality.

“This facility will allow the College to be on more equal footing with peer veterinary hospitals in the Southeast and across the country,” Associate Dean for Clinical Services Dr. Gary M. Baxter said. “This was an essential step to be able to attract the highest-caliber faculty, interns, residents and students to the College and to further improve clinical teaching, client and referring veterinarian services, and patient care within the Hospital.”

Other features of the new Hospital include a flexible design to meet current needs and to allow for future expansion; separate emergency entrances for large and small animals; numerous teaching and collaboration spaces; expanded diagnostic imaging capabilities; and a new linear accelerator, allowing the Hospital to offer advanced radiation therapy.

The Veterinary Education Center, which is part of the Veterinary Medical Center campus, features an auditorium, a technology-enabled active learning classroom and two smaller classrooms.

“Providing advanced animal healthcare for large and small animals while training the next generation of veterinarians is the hallmark of our program,” Baxter said. “Our new Hospital and Education Center will allow us to continue this tradition of excellence.”

The Veterinary Medical Center was designed by Perkins+Will and built by Turner Construction Co. To learn more, or for directions to our new facility, please visit: vet.uga.edu/hospital

Cover photos by: Christopher B. Herron (top left & bottom right), Andrew D. Tucker (bottom left & top right) and Sue Myers Smith.
We are excited to welcome back Dr. Leticia M. Dantas to our behavioral medicine service. Dantas is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and also has a PhD in behavioral medicine, animal mental health and welfare. For referrals and consultations, call 706.542.3221. To make an appointment, call 706.542.1984.

The UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital recently hired two new board-certified dermatologists. Dr. Frane Banovic joined the Hospital faculty in July. He comes to UGA from North Carolina State University, where he completed his residency and fellowship in investigative dermatology.

Dr. Fiona L. Bateman joined the Hospital in January. She has more than seven years of experience in veterinary dermatology, including serving as the founder and director of Animal Dermatology Solutions in Australia.

To make a referral or to request a consultation or an appointment with this service, call 706.542.3221 or send an email to vetderm@uga.edu.

From greeting our clients as they walk in the door to tracking down answers, following up on surveys and promoting success stories, both DePaolo and Carpenter are a great resource for our clients.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to them if you ever need assistance: Cheryl DePaolo—706.207.6340, cheryls@uga.edu
Karissa Carpenter—706.207.6504, vthlaclient@uga.edu

The College is currently offering several clinical trial opportunities. To learn more, please visit: vet.uga.edu/research/clinical/current

Our Hospital is dedicated to offering superior customer service. To assist with this, we created two new client support coordinator positions.

Cheryl DePaolo, our small animal client support coordinator, worked in the Hospital’s ophthalmology service as a veterinary assistant for four years and then served as the front desk receptionist for five years before taking on this new role.

Cheryl DePaolo—706.207.6340, cheryls@uga.edu
Karissa Carpenter—706.207.6504, vthlaclient@uga.edu

Congratulations to Dr. Kathryn A. Seabaugh, who is now a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. Seabaugh joined the UGA VTH in 2013 and is a clinical assistant professor of equine ambulatory and sports medicine. Her new certification will allow the Hospital to continue to expand its equine sports medicine program.

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Dr. Sam Franklin and rehab technician Jodi Seidel fit Rabbit for his prosthetics. Photos by Christopher B. Herron.

Rabbit, a 4-year-old Yorkiepoo, was born missing all four paws and part of three of his limbs.

“As soon as we began fostering Rabbit, I started looking into ways to help him,” said Jessie Romer, owner of the Bliss Animal Haven rescue group. “My veterinarian, Dr. Asha Wise (DVM ’89) of Monroe Animal Care Hospital, suggested I reach out to OrthoPets, a company that specializes in doggie prosthetics.”

The company felt Rabbit would be a good candidate and even agreed to donate two of the three prosthetics.

However, to fit him for his new limbs would require the help of a local specialist followed by several weeks of rehab to teach him how to use them. That was when Romer turned to the UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital for help.

“The fitting process was lengthy, but once the prosthetics were in and properly adjusted, Rabbit took to them really quickly,” said Dr. Samuel F. Franklin, an orthopedics and sports medicine specialist at the UGA VTH. “Most dogs can compensate on their own when they are missing a limb, but Rabbit’s deformities were so extensive that prosthetics were the best option for him.”

Once the fit was finalized, Rabbit began rehab through the Hospital’s small animal rehabilitation service to learn how to properly sit, stand and walk in his new legs.

“It was amazing watching him make the adjustment. He took his first steps right away and after just a few sessions he was running around like he had been using the prosthetics his whole life,” said UGA VTH rehab technician Jodi Seidel. “Even when we would take the prosthetics off you could tell that he was holding himself up a little straighter. The goal was to give him a better quality of life, and I feel we definitely achieved that.”

The Hospital’s new small animal rehabilitation service is dedicated to helping its patients achieve improved mobility, strength, fitness and cardiovascular health. Learn more at: vet.uga.edu/hospital/services/small-animal-rehabilitation

Prosthetics give dog new lease on life

Rabbit takes his first steps on his new legs.

Diagnosing lameness in horses

Need help diagnosing an obscure or multiple limb equine lameness case? Let us assist you. One of our diagnostic imaging options is nuclear scintigraphy (bone scan). This imaging modality allows us to detect the location of problems in the lower and upper limbs, back, pelvis and neck through the use of a radioactive isotope. Areas of the body undergoing remodeling absorb the isotope at a higher rate creating “hot spots” that can be detected using a gamma camera.

Once the problem area or areas have been identified, additional diagnostic modalities such as ultrasound, radiography, CT and MRI can be used to further characterize the lesion(s). Our equine imaging specialists and clinicians will then work with you to offer targeted treatment options. For more information, or to make a referral or an appointment, please call 706.542.3223.
Now located at 2200 College Station Road

GPS DIRECTIONS
The new UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital can be found using most GPS devices. Just enter our address and go!

DIRECTIONS FROM LOOP 10
Once you get to Athens, Ga., merge onto Loop 10 and stay on the loop until you get to exit #7 for College Station Road. Once you exit, head east on College Station Road away from the main UGA campus. Drive approximately 2 miles until you come to a traffic light at Veterinary Medicine Drive/International Drive. Turn right at the light and follow the signs to the appropriate parking lot. Visit vet.uga.edu/vmc/location for more information.