

**2024 SJDAWC Funded Projects
(Alphabetical order of PI)**

PIs	Crane B, Proudfoot K, McKenna S
Project Title	Behavioural evaluation of bulls during semen collection using electroejaculation and alternative techniques
Project Summary	<p>The potential fertility of bulls is important to the cattle industry and relies on the evaluation of semen. Semen collection in bulls is often achieved using electroejaculation (EE), a procedure which is considered painful in other species. An alternative technique to EE is massage of the internal sex glands but this method is less consistent, more time consuming and more taxing for the operator, resulting in less use in the field.</p> <p>The goal of this project is to better understand the effects of EE and massage on pain and aversion in bulls. The first objective will be to determine if EE is aversive to bulls. This will be achieved by comparing a bull's choice to spend time in a space that resembles the area where they experienced EE by using recognizable color and shape patterns. If EE is aversive, it is expected that bulls will spend less time in the area with the pattern representing the EE experience. The second objective will be to compare behavioral signs of pain between bulls undergoing semen collection through either EE or massage. Facial images of bulls before and during their semen collection by either EE or massage will be compared for the presence of specific expressions indicative of pain. An improved understanding of the bull's experience during EE is the starting point to determining the value of refinements to the procedure. The result would be to refine a widely performed procedure in the cattle industry towards improved animal welfare.</p>
Amount	\$78,720
Type of Application	Research

PIs	Mellish M, Ritter C, VanLeeuwen J
Project Title	Improving the welfare of working donkey harnesses in Meru County, Kenya, through participatory action research
Project Summary	<p>Preliminary work in 2023 indicated that currently used donkey harnesses for pulling carts in Meru County, Kenya, result in hypertrophied skin on the neck and respiratory disease. The overall project goal is to decrease pain and breathlessness in draft donkeys in Kenya through the development and trial of a harness with improved welfare. Supporting objectives include identify challenges and motivations of donkey drivers to the use of a more welfare-friendly harness; develop a method to easily construct the harness through a template and sourcing local materials; support the use of the harness; and foster improved recognition of donkeys as sentient beings by donkey drivers.</p> <p>Methods: Participatory action research (PAR) will be used to develop the harness. In PAR, researchers, and participants (i.e., donkey drivers) work collaboratively to achieve change. By including donkey drivers in every step of the harness development and refinement, we will ensure that proposed solutions are practical and affordable, and the likelihood of adoption in the community is increased. Specifically, thirty donkey drivers, using focus groups, will discuss key challenging areas. By employing the Standardized Equine Based Welfare Assessment Tool (SEBWAT), a welfare assessment will be performed at the beginning and end of the study.</p> <p>Relevance to animal welfare: The current method of harnessing appears to not promote good health and cardiorespiratory function and may cause breathlessness and pain to the donkey. An improved harness would directly positively impact the welfare of the draft donkey.</p>
Amount	\$97,236
Type of Application	Research

PIs	Ogilvie A, Foley P, MacDonald R, MacLean R, MacLean M
Project Title	Medical and surgical care of homeless small animals
Project Summary	<p>The PEI Humane Society and the Atlantic Veterinary College see hundreds of homeless cats and dogs every year with injuries or illnesses requiring veterinary care. These animals are either found wandering at large and brought in by good Samaritans or shelter staff and volunteers, surrendered by owners who can no longer care for their pets for a variety of reasons, or seized because of animal welfare investigations. The funding from this grant the faculty, staff, and students at the Atlantic Veterinary College and PEIHS can care for many of these animals and return them to a state of health, which allows them to be adopted into homes in the community. This project has the obvious benefit of caring for these animals, who would otherwise not receive the medical or surgical care they require and deserve. An underlying and perhaps more far-reaching benefit to this project is the fostering of desire to care for animals without owners among the faculty, staff, and veterinary students of the AVC. The PI's capture and review detailed data of the cases that present to the VTH, funds spent, and ultimate patient outcome. The staff and, possibly more importantly, students in the AVC VTH are aware of the role of the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre in supporting this project. The vet students serve as ambassadors for animal welfare as they leave the AVC. This experience and exposure have the potential to magnify the effect of every dollar generously provided by the Sir James Dunn Welfare Grant and continue the benefits throughout an even wider veterinary community with regards to animal welfare concerns for homeless animals.</p>
Amount	\$24,044
Type of Application	Service