

SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE *at the Atlantic Veterinary College*



PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND

SJDAWC WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



Meghan Dewar

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre welcomed Meghan Dewar as our new administrative assistant in August. Meghan is a proud UPEI alum (Class of 2024) and has a background in journalism and communications with experience as a multimedia reporter for The Guardian, The Cape Breton Post, The Herald, and The Telegram. Her time is split between the SJDAWC and AVC Graduate Studies and Research. We are thrilled to have Meghan as part of our SJDAWC team!

SJDAWC BIDS FAREWELL TO FORMER ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

WE WELCOME FEEDBACK!

Please contact us at animalwelfare@upei.ca to receive the newsletter (in full colour) by email and to be added to our email list for occasional upcoming events.

To learn how you can support the Centre, please go to upei.ca/awc or write to:

**The Sir James Dunn
Animal Welfare Centre**
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince
Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI,
Canada C1A 4P3

*All donations are
tax deductible.*



Sherri Pineau and Dr. Katy Proudfoot

An enthusiastic congratulations to Sherri Pineau, the SJDAWC's former administrative assistant, as she was recognized as a Dean's Awards of Excellence recipient in 2025. Sherri has recently been promoted to another position within UPEI's Pathology and Microbiology department. Sherri played a critical role in the success of the SJDAWC over the past five years. She carried out each task with a methodical approach, a strong sense of responsibility, and sound judgment. Over the years, Sherri evolved from an administrative support role into a true collaborator. Her impact on the SJDAWC will be felt for years to come. We will deeply miss Sherri at the SJDAWC and wish her luck in her new position.

A note from Sherri:

"I started working at the SJDAWC just two weeks before the pandemic, which meant I had to quickly learn to be resilient—not always an easy task! The Centre is a lively place, and there has never been a dull moment, from arranging student travel for the Animal Welfare Assessment contest, to organizing webinars, to preparing annual reports and newsletters.

So, here is my "Academy Awards moment" to thank those who have supported me over the past five years. Thank you to the Sir James Dunn Trustees for their ongoing support of the SJDAWC; to Dr. Katy Proudfoot for being such a wonderful, supportive boss and confidant; to Dr. Michael Cockram for his thoughtful input and perspective; and to Dr. Alice Crook, former SJDAWC Coordinator, who—even in retirement—was always approachable and willing to answer the occasional question.

This past June, I was honoured to receive one of the AVC Dean's Awards of Excellence—thank you again to Dr. Proudfoot for the nomination.

I haven't moved far within AVC—just a couple of floors up—to join the Department of Pathology and Microbiology as administrative assistant to the department chair. This new role is an exciting stepping stone in my career, and one I simply could not pass up!"



Dr. Michael Cockram

DR. COCKRAM TO RETIRE

Dr. Michael Cockram is retiring on January 1, 2026. Dr. Cockram has shared a summary of his activities in his role as the Chair in Animal Welfare.

Undertake research and knowledge transfer activities on some of the major animal welfare issues in Canada, primarily involving transport and slaughter

- Research on the long-distance transport of horses to slaughter, mortality and injury during the handling and transport of broiler chickens, feeding of unweaned dairy calves during their transport to veal units, the transport of cull dairy cows and the fitness of animals transported to slaughter
- Expert witness for the Department of Justice Canada on legal challenges to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency guidelines for ritual slaughter of food animals without pre-slaughter stunning

Improve knowledge and understanding of animal welfare

- Co-editor and author of a book with Temple Grandin on the Slaughter of Farmed Animals
- In the final stages of completing a textbook on Animal Management and Welfare
- Contributed chapters to major publications on animal welfare: Animal Welfare, Routledge Handbook of Animal Welfare, Livestock Handling and Transport, Encyclopedia of Meat Sciences, and Preslaughter Handling and Slaughter of Meat Animals

- Explained the implications of disease for welfare in a chapter on Health and Disease in Animal Welfare
- Online course on animal welfare for a Master's in Animal Welfare, Ethics and the Law, University of Athens, Greece
- Coach for student teams competing at the Annual Intercollegiate Animal Welfare Judging Competition
- Taught courses in animal welfare for DVM and graduate students, and supervised graduate students
- Conducted studies to identify potential welfare issues in Nigeria and China

Advance the quality of academic studies in animal welfare

- Animal welfare and behaviour section editor for animal: the international journal of animal biosciences
- Member of the NSERC Scholarships and Postdoctoral Awards Review Committee for Plant and Animal Biology
- Local organiser and scientific chair for the 2018 International Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology held at UPEI
- Reviewer of research grants and journal publications
- Used a range of measurements (behaviour, physiology, health and pathology) to assess responses of animals to housing and management
- Provided input into clinical studies at AVC that had welfare relevance

Provide academic advice to committees drafting animal welfare codes of practice, position statements and advice to legislative bodies

- Hearing Expert Member of the European Food Safety Authority, Scientific Panel Animal Health and Welfare, Farm to Fork Working Group on the Transport of Animals
- Member of the scientific committee for the National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice for sheep, veal cattle and transport and member of the code development committees for equines, sheep and veal cattle
- Member of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Animal Welfare Committee and Chair of large animal sub-committee
- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Witness to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for session on Amendments to Health of Animals Regulations for Humane Transportation

A note from Michael:

"After retiring from UPEI, I plan to travel, walk, cycle, and camp. I will also continue many of my academic activities. It has been a wonderful opportunity to be associated with the SJDAWC. However, it has also been, at times, a challenging environment in which to work. There is still much to be done to enhance the understanding of animal welfare and research within AVC. The Centre's work has expanded and improved considerably, and the SJDAWC is currently in good hands. I anticipate that it will continue to advance the cause of animal welfare."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SJDAWC

DOIRON BENEFITS FROM TRAVEL AWARD

Gabie Doiron was a recipient of a SJDAWC student travel award for an external rotation related to animal welfare. Gabie was appreciative of the support of the SJDAWC to travel to the Granby Zoo in Granby, Quebec. This rotation involved four weeks of working alongside the two veterinarians in the zoo's veterinary hospital, treating ill animals, and implementing preventative care for all species. The opportunity also included valuable experience learning about cooperative care, which emphasizes an animal's willing participation in medical intervention, allowing them the freedom of choice in their daily lives.

During the rotation, Gabie was able to become educated on the care of a variety of zoological species and the challenges of housing those animals in captivity. Gabie also had the opportunity to observe gorilla training for physical exams, blood draws on rhinos, and Japanese macaque dental prophylaxis.

"Without SJDAWC's contribution, I likely would not have been able to gain this experience, and I am therefore so deeply grateful."

Gabie Doiron, Class of 2026



Gabie Doiron
with Turnip



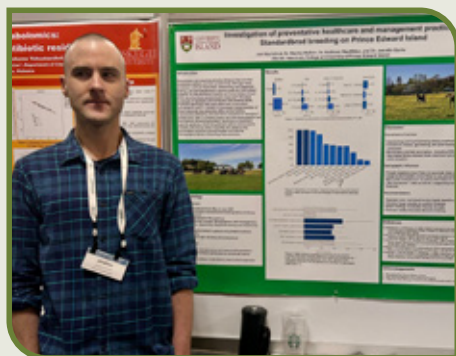
SJDAWC VETSRA STUDENT JON KLYMCHUK RECEIVES AWARD

Congratulations to Jon Klymchuk, AVC Class of 2028, for winning the 3-Minute Thesis award and representing SJDAWC at the 2025 AVC Summer Research and Leadership Program poster presentation.

preventative practices and will be sharing the results with breeders in a user-friendly format to improve Standardbred health and welfare on the Island.

This summer Jon completed a project with Drs. Jen Burns and Martha Mellish about Standardbred horse breeders across Prince Edward Island to document current preventative healthcare strategies. He conducted in-person surveys covering vaccinations, deworming practices, biosecurity, dental health, hoof care, pasture access, and demographics of equine owners. He then used demographic data to model predictors of

Jon's experience working with Drs. Burns and Mellish was invaluable, as he had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in ambulatory equine medicine, meet members of the Standardbred industry, and travel to Spokane, Washington for the Veterinary Scholars Symposium. Jon also represented the AVC at the Emerging Scholars Summit in Calgary in October.



Jon Klymchuk

"I recommend the SJDAWC Veterinary Summer Research Award for students seeking community-focused, applied research with strong mentorship and opportunities to present work nationally."

Jon Klymchuk, Class of 2028

To find out how to apply for a 2026 SJDAWC VetSRA (Veterinary Summer Research Award), please visit our website at awc.upei.ca/summer-research

ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE

GOING FEAR-FREE WITH DR. KATE RUNDLE

Dr. Kate Rundle grew up on the Island and is an AVC alumni. She has worked in small animal general practice since graduation. As a general practitioner, Dr. Rundle works with owners to help understand and reduce their pet's fear and anxiety. Many people may not understand their pet's body language and what they are trying to communicate.

Vet clinics are a common place for pets to experience fear and anxiety. Using fear-free and low stress techniques during examinations and procedures can help pets feel more comfortable. For some pets, prescribing pre-visit pharmaceuticals (PVP) before vet appointments to reduce fear and anxiety can make a big difference in their experience. These strategies not only make the clinic a more positive

place for pets to visit but also make it more likely for owners to keep up with routine and preventative veterinary care.

Outside of the vet clinic, many pets also experience fear and anxiety in their everyday lives. Changes at home, such as creating safe spaces or avoiding stressors, can make a difference. Medications, whether used daily or situationally, can also play an important role in improving the welfare of these patients. Just like some people, pets may need and benefit from medications to help reduce fear and anxiety. This can allow pets to also learn new behaviours and replace more fearful ones.

Fear and anxiety can greatly impact a dog's or cat's welfare and quality of life

at home. It is important as a veterinary profession to advocate for our patients to help improve their welfare. More information about published PVP doses can be found in the Canadian Veterinary Journal review article written by Dr. Rundle and her classmates during their senior year at AVC. Erickson et al., 2021: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8360309/>



Dr. Kate Rundle

NEW GRAD STUDENT STUDYING ON-FARM DECISIONS

AVC welcomed a new graduate student, Tunmise Faith Ehigbor, in Fall 2024, supervised by Drs. Caroline Ritter and Katy Proudfoot. Faith studied animal behaviour and welfare during his MSc at the University of Guelph and did a BSc in animal physiology at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria.

His research focuses on studying and understanding the decision-making processes of dairy farmers and veterinarians regarding their antimicrobial use practices. Farmers and veterinarians are responsible for making most on-farm decisions, and their decisions have the potential to significantly impact animal welfare, health,



Tunmise Faith Ehigbor

and productivity. Faith's research focuses on providing the support needed to make decisions aligning with evidence-based practices and motivate behaviour change towards sustainable practices for animal health and welfare.

"The most notable part of pursuing further education at AVC is broadening my horizons and learning new methods to improve the welfare and health of animals. I am enjoying this new experience, and I am excited to grow and expand my capabilities as a young researcher."

Tunmise Faith Ehigbor

SPOTLIGHT ON DR. MARTHA MELLISH AND DONKEY WELFARE

Dr. Martha Mellish, a veterinarian at AVC, began her research on working donkey welfare in Meru County, Kenya in 2023 supported by the SJDAWC, the AVC Internal Research Fund, and Farmers Helping Farmers.



Dr. Martha Mellish with a young donkey

The first project involved an owner survey to understand the welfare of donkeys and the challenges faced by their owners. Findings highlighted the vital role of donkeys in local livelihoods. In agricultural areas, male, uncastrated donkeys pull carts loaded with goods such as vegetables and milk to market. In drier, less populated regions, they carry water for household use six to seven days a week.

Further study confirmed a serious health issue linked to current cart and harness designs. Donkeys were developing tracheal collapse, a condition that impairs breathing and causes respiratory distress, particularly when pulling carts over hilly terrain.

Building on these findings, a new SJDAWC-funded project is now underway using a community-designed donkey cart and harness system aimed at improving welfare. A Master of Veterinary Science student at the University of Nairobi, Dr. Josphat Matara, is leading this study. The project combines welfare assessments before and after cart use with focus groups and in-depth interviews with donkey owners.

Additionally, health clinics are being provided. In 2025, over 400 donkeys were vaccinated against tetanus and rabies, addressing preventable causes of mortality. Fourth-year AVC students on a smallholder livestock rotation gain hands-on experience caring for donkeys, including hoof, dental, and general health care.

MATARA IMPROVING DONKEY CARE

Dr. Josphat Matara is pursuing a Master of Veterinary Science at the University of Nairobi through a grant provided by the SJDAWC. Previously, he worked with the Brooke East Africa Animal Welfare office and practiced as a mixed-animal veterinarian in Meru County, Kenya. He has a deep commitment to animal welfare. A highlight of his program has been designing and supporting welfare-friendly donkey carts promoted by his project. Currently in Prince Edward Island, Dr. Marata is enrolled in the Animal Welfare graduate course at the Atlantic Veterinary College and gaining hands-on experience with local veterinarians to apply in his project and veterinary practice in Kenya. Dr. Marata is supervised by Dr. Martha Mellish.



Dr. Josphat Matara



AWARDS

2025 CHRISTOFOR AWARD IN ANIMAL WELFARE

Laura Groves, AVC Class of 2026, received the 2025 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare for her long-standing interest in improving the welfare of animals.

Originally from Carbonear, Newfoundland and Labrador, Laura pursued her bachelor's degree in Animal Science at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus before beginning her master's degree at AVC in 2020 and defending in January 2025.

Laura is an avid volunteer at the AVC, with experience as the Animal Welfare Club and International

Veterinary Medicine president in her second and third year and vice-president in her first year. She has also served in important roles on AVC's student chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the Society of Atlantic Veterinary Students, and participated on the Animal Welfare Assessment team. She has also been a student representative for UPEI's Animal Care Committee, AVC PetScience, AVC Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, and SJDAWC. Additionally, she is currently a volunteer with Marine Animal Response Society and has raised \$500 USD for a wildlife rehab in Costa Rica.

"The scholarship is a great reminder that I'm where I'm supposed to be and that I deserve to be a student here."

Laura Groves, Class of 2026



Laura Groves



Katelyn Visser

"Knowing that this award was created in memory of Dr. Taylor, a strong member of his community and a dedicated supporter of education, makes this even more meaningful to receive."

Katelyn Visser, Class of 2027

2025 DR. TOM A. W. TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP

The 2025 Dr. Tom A. W. Taylor Scholarship was awarded to Katelyn Visser, AVC Class of 2027. Established in memory of Dr. Tom A. W. Taylor, this award is given to a student who is well-rounded and academically proficient and has demonstrated initiative and interest in research activities.

Katelyn demonstrates this with her variety of volunteer work and extracurriculars which include serving as the senior representative for the Students of Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and President of the International Veterinary Medicine and One Health Club. She also serves as the treasurer for the Christian Veterinary Fellowship at AVC and is part of the Charlottetown Christian Reformed Church.

Additionally, as a former varsity soccer player, she continues to play soccer on PEI, as well as milking cows at a local dairy farm.

Post-graduation, Katelyn plans to practice as a large animal veterinarian in a rural area of Canada to provide care long-term to a community that needs it.



"HAY" EVERYONE WE WANT TO THANK OUR SUPPORTERS!



SUPPORTERS SPOTLIGHT

We gratefully acknowledge the sustained financial support of **The Christofo**r and **The Sir James Dunn Foundations**, without which the SJDAWC would not exist.

We also thank the following organizations and individuals who have supported the SJDAWC in the last year:

- AVC Class of 2025
- The Christofo Foundation
- Mission Kitty Inc.
- The Sir James Dunn Foundation
- Holly and Les Burridge
- Eric Butler and Suzanne Rocca-Butler
- Dr. Donald Miller and Ms. Susan Clarke
- Alice Crook
- Deborah Flowers
- Glenn Loranger
- Kevin and Jeanna MacLeod
- Derek Mathers
- Rosemary O'Malley-Keyes
- Laura and Jeffrey Pinhey
- Maria Rodriguez

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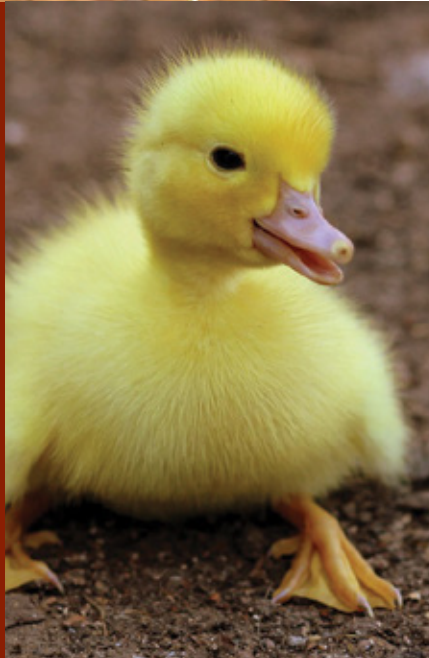
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