

Award scheme adds to knowledge bank

To mark the eighteenth year of the Connect Bursary Awards, we are taking a look back at last year's winners. Undergraduate students from across the UK had the opportunity to advance their knowledge of veterinary



medicine through the scheme from Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health.

"Being part of the Connect Bursary is intended to be an inspiring experience that will give participants a taste of working in industry.

The rich variety of projects that the students submitted this year was no less striking than in previous years. Their research took us on a journey covering projects as diverse as sustainability of game reserve management in South Africa to ovine research in France.

Many were very practically based, including one that went back to basics in asking what our veterinary customers "really want". No less

practical or beneficial to the industry was our overall winner's research. The Royal Veterinary College's Matthew Burge's study into the effects of mastitis on pregnancy in cattle was impressive, combining a level of detail and authority to his research that made him a truly worthy recipient of this Award."

David Hallas
 General Manager
 Intervet/Schering-Plough
 Animal Health

The 2009 bursary award projects:

- **Katie McCreary** (The Royal Veterinary College)
- **Emily Parr** (University of Bristol)
- **Naomi Ragsdell** (University of Nottingham)
- **Kevin Chretien** (University of Glasgow)
- **Sarah Caddy** (University of Cambridge)
- **Jessica Greenberg** (University of Glasgow)

THE WINNER
 • **Matthew Burge** •
 (The Royal Veterinary College)

Presentation day reveals strength of R&D

Judging the 2008 Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health Connect Bursary Award Scheme was a real privilege. The sheer energy and enthusiasm that the students demonstrated for their projects is one of the hallmarks of the opportunity created by winning a bursary of this kind. That freedom to explore and perhaps break new ground is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and something we hope all our recipients will embrace. We hope it will also encourage students reading this to apply for next year's awards.

The benefits to the industry of this R&D by students "at the cutting edge" are enormous. Our winner Matthew Burge's study showed real application underpinned by sound scientific principles and his work investigating mastitis will undoubtedly add to the knowledge of the dairy industry in this important area.

Mike Francis
R&D Director
Intervet/Schering-Plough
Animal Health



Mike Francis, R&D Director, ISPAH

The bursary award projects:

Katie McCreary (The Royal Veterinary College) looked at ten farms in the north of England and spent time at the Veterinary Laboratory Agency (VLA) to conduct what she believed to be the first study in the UK into the prevalence of Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) in different stages of pig production and in slurry.



Naomi Ragsdell (University of Nottingham) conducted a 10-week



survey into customer care asking clients of veterinary practices what they most wanted from their experience. The conclusion was that the majority of clients don't mind waiting or care about surgery décor – all they want is "to be treated as individuals".

Sarah Caddy (University of Cambridge). An investigation into the relationship between Canine Parvovirus and liver biochemistry. Sarah's aim was to determine if significant changes in liver biochemistry occur in dogs with CPV-2 infection, and whether any changes correlate with the outcome of infection collecting data from 58 dogs. While the study was inconclusive, Sarah hoped that her work might provide a platform for future prospective studies to investigate the interaction of CPV-2 and the liver directly.



Emily Parr (University of Bristol) looked at the economic and



conservational work being undertaken in South Africa to rehabilitate farmland and joined a project gathering data to enable farmers to make rapid, knowledge-based decisions that will protect wildlife and improve land management.

Kevin Chretien (University of Glasgow) travelled to Lyon in France to assist in a laboratory-based research project into Jaagsiekte Sheep Retrovirus (JSRV), conducted by Dr Caroline Leroux.



Jessica Greenberg (University of Glasgow) investigated Feline Leukaemia virus (FeLV), the pathogenic



retrovirus of cats capable of causing chronic infection. She concluded that the information gathered about the characteristics of the endogenous proviral sequences found within domestic cat genomes could further the understanding of the pathogenicity and virulence of FeLV, helping us work toward keeping more cats healthy.

THE WINNER:

Matthew Burge from The Royal Veterinary College was awarded the overall Connect Bursary Award for his research into clinical mastitis in dairy cows in the UK.

Fertility and mastitis link strengthened

While studies exist showing that clinical mastitis can adversely affect fertility parameters, there has been no research quantifying the severity of clinical mastitis and the extent to which this has a differential effect on fertility.

This was Matthew Burge's mission. In the course of his research, Matthew assessed 200 Friesian-Holstein cows from four Dorset farms. Non-pregnant cows were scored according to the extent of their mastitis, milk samples were collected and fertility data analysed. His survey, over a 22-month period, produced some striking results.

Acknowledging that many of the conclusions he was able to draw require further study, Matthew's findings build on other research to show that there is a positive correlation between increased clinical severity of mastitis and reduced reproductive performance. This was evidenced where cows with increased systemic signs of infection showed greater reduction in fertility while those whose infection was confined to their milk,

appeared to experience no significant reduction in fertility. Matthew's study suggests that the clinical severity and degree of fertility loss appear to be connected to the different bacterial cause of the infection, opening the door for further ground-breaking research into this important issue for the dairy industry.



Mike Francis, Matthew Burge & David Hallas

connect

 **Intervet**
Schering-Plough Animal Health

Connect is an information and support service for veterinary students which provides individuals and recognised groups and societies with educational and sponsorship assistance during college.

The scheme incorporates a number of benefits which include:

Literature – Intervet/Schering-Plough has an extensive collection of literature on a variety of subjects in the companion animal, livestock and poultry sectors. Simply e-mail Customer Support at support.uk@intervet.com to find out more.

Education support –

Intervet/Schering-Plough has played an active role in sponsoring clinical club meetings and will continue to positively receive requests for presentations or lectures.

Sponsorship – If you have an activity that you would like to be sponsored, which is directly related to college, then Intervet/Schering-Plough might be able to help. Make your request in writing (or via email), remembering to put it on headed paper. If your request is accepted, all Intervet/Schering-Plough ask is that you become involved in some publicity and take some photos to mark the occasion.

Bursary Awards – The annual bursary provides financial assistance to students enabling them to undertake research in new and exciting areas of veterinary work.

To submit your proposal for 2010 simply contact Diana Rhodes at Blue Zebra on 01865 861600 or the staff representative at your vet school:

University of Bristol Philip Duffus
University of Cambridge Katheryn Ayres
University of Edinburgh Jacqui Matthews
University of Glasgow Lesley Nicolson/Maureen McNulty
University of Liverpool TBC
Royal Veterinary College Jenny Jones
University of Nottingham..... Malcolm Cobb

Your Point of Contact...

Paula Boyden BVetMed MRCVS manages the Intervet/Schering-Plough Connect initiative, co-ordinating with both students and staff at vet schools.

Paula graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 1992. After 11 years in practice, Paula joined Intervet as a Veterinary Adviser in 2002. She is now in a corporate marketing role with responsibility for National Vaccination Month and the Forging the Link initiative (raising awareness of the link between violence to animals and violence to people).



Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, a leading animal health company in the UK based in Milton Keynes, is dedicated to the research and development of high quality innovative animal health products and providing industry-leading technical support and customer service. For more information email support.uk@intervet.com or visit one of the following websites:

www.intervet.co.uk

www.future-of-vaccination.co.uk

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