

A Condensed History of  
**Veterinary Medicine**

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Special Report 366  
College of Agriculture  
University of Missouri-Columbia

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## 1872–1910

The University of Missouri, the first land grant university west of the Mississippi River, was established by the Missouri legislature in 1839. The first instruction in veterinary medicine was offered in 1872 when Professors H. J. Detmers and L. J. Smith were employed as lecturers in veterinary surgery by the University's agricultural department.

In 1884, Dr. Paul Paquin was the first veterinarian appointed as a faculty member. He became head of the newly created Department of Veterinary Science in the University's Department of Agriculture in 1885, thus beginning a continuous program concerned with diseases of livestock and poultry. He also served as the first state veterinarian after that position was established by the legislature in 1885. Dr. Paquin operated one of the first vaccine virus laboratories in the country, taught courses to agricultural and medical students, conducted research on animal diseases, and investigated diseases in various parts of Missouri.

The first building for veterinary medicine was a laboratory built in 1887 on the white campus, east and north of the present Memorial Union. One of the first diseases studied in this laboratory was Texas fever.

When Dr. Paquin resigned in 1891, Dr. John Connaway, a former student of Dr. Paquin and a graduate of the Chicago Veterinary College, succeeded him as head of the Veterinary Science Department. He held that position until 1931.

The department was moved from its laboratory building to the third floor of Switzler Hall on Francis Quadrangle in 1895. In 1901, the 41st General Assembly appropriated \$12,000 to build the Livestock Building, a limestone structure which housed laboratories, a lecture room, a library and an office on the second floor, and two animal rooms and a dissecting room on the first floor. A judging arena at the rear was used for several years by the Department of Animal Husbandry, although later the entire building was used by the Department of Veterinary Science. Until its demolition in the fall of 1985, the Livestock Building was subsequently used by the Department of Agricultural Engineering.

## 1910–1946

In 1910, \$15,000 was appropriated to begin construction on Connaway Hall, the new veterinary science building. Located east of Sanborn Field, its three stories were built of Missouri limestone and contained laboratories, operating rooms, offices, classrooms and a museum. At this same time, production of anti-hog cholera serum was begun in buildings located at the foot of the hill at the end of Rollins Street.

In 1915, \$50,000 was appropriated to expand the hog cholera program. Laboratory buildings, swine barns, slaughtering facilities with refrigeration, an incinerator, and a deep well water system were developed on a 90-acre farm three miles north of Columbia. The University sold serum and virus to veterinarians and farmers, assuring a reliable supply of these biologics at a reasonable cost. When privately owned serum plants developed, the state decided to discontinue production. The last serum was sold Nov. 13, 1938. The land and buildings were gradually converted to a research farm for the study of animal and poultry diseases.

In 1925, a special course for graduate veterinarians was held in Connaway Hall through the cooperation of the Missouri Veterinary Medical Association and the College of Agriculture. This course signaled the beginning of the annual short course, later called the Annual Conference for Veterinarians.

In 1931, Dr. Adrian J. Durant was appointed chairman of the Department of Veterinary Science. During the next few years, the department developed and distributed an effective fowl pox vaccine, studied brucellosis in cattle and swine, and developed and produced an antigen for use in the tube agglutination test for pullorum.

## 1946–1965

By 1946, World War II veterans had convinced the state legislature to establish a School of Veterinary Science, and \$240,000 was appropriated. Dr. A. J. Durant, chairman of the Department of Veterinary Science, and Drs. Cecil Elder, A. W. Uren, H. C. McDougale, O. S. Crisler and D. E. R. Rodabaugh were the nucleus for the new professional school. A one-story wing was added to Connaway Hall and a temporary building (still in use in 1986) was moved from Whiteman Air Force Base to provide space for clinical activities and for teaching veterinary pathology and pharmacology. The first students entering the four-year program were 23 men from Missouri, three men from Nebraska and 1 man from Tennessee. Class size was limited to 30 students each year.

The School of Veterinary Medicine, still a part of the College of Agriculture, was formally established in 1949 with Dr. Aaron H. Groth as director. In 1950, Dr. Groth's title was changed to dean. The clinical program was strengthened when Dr. Stanley Smith, a Columbia veterinarian since 1892, was appointed special lecturer and clinician. The University of Missouri graduated its first veterinarians in Memorial Stadium on June 6, 1950 as hard rain fell. President Harry S. Truman was the commencement speaker.

In 1956, \$800,000 of a requested one million dollars was appropriated for a hospital clinic building, but by the time bids were opened in

1960, funds were sufficient to complete only the first floor of the proposed building. The School of Veterinary Medicine gained its administrative autonomy from the College of Agriculture in 1960.

During remodeling of the old facilities in the early 60s, the library was moved from Connaway to a temporary building where the small animal ward was converted into a research laboratory, and student dormitories were converted to office-laboratories. Two stories were added to the one-story wing built on Connaway Hall in 1948 as well as a two-story wing at the west end of the building. Funds were insufficient to complete the third floor of the west wing until a later date. Dean Groth resigned in 1964, and Dr. Burnell W. Kingrey became the second dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine.

In 1964, an appropriation from the state allowed the completion of the second floor of the hospital clinic building. Beginning in 1964, and continuing until 1979, veterinary career day was sponsored by the Missouri Veterinary Medical Association and the student chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Programs and tours were held for high school students in the state, often followed in the evening by an open house for the community.

## 1965–1986

Class size doubled to 60 in 1965 and increased to 65 in 1970. The *Faculty News*, first published in 1968, became the *Veterinary Medical Review* in 1970 when circulation expanded to include alumni. Crowded conditions forced establishment of several annexes. A miniature swine project and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) were located in houses on Virginia Street. The virology section of veterinary microbiology was located in a temporary Connaway Hall annex sometimes called the "Tilton' Hilton". Research continued at the research farm north of town.

Other projects were conducted in collaboration with the Medical School, the Sinclair Farm, the College of Agriculture and the Dalton Research Center.

In 1968, 27 Missouri veterinary students were the final participants in a unique national project producing a human rabies antglobulin. When a need for expanded diagnostic services was recognized in 1968, a temporary three-trailer laboratory was assembled. In 1972, class size increased to 72, and a block rotation system was initiated for 3rd- and 4th-year students.

The school acquired the 288-acre farm donated by University President Dr. Frederick Middlebush, and the Equine Center opened there in the Fall of 1973. Proposed building funds for the Veterinary School were cut in 1973 from \$6.4 million to \$400,000 planning

money. Dr. Kingrey resigned in 1973, and Dr. Kenneth Weide became Dean.

In 1974, as the 25th class graduated, the school was designated the College of Veterinary Medicine by the curators. Later that year, construction began on a new veterinary medicine building and a diagnostic laboratory. Huge reductions in University and federal funds, in 1975 reduced the research farm to maintenance status, and the college budget was cut 6 percent in a time of skyrocketing inflation.

In 1976, the Olin Foundation and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals funded a new OFA building at Middlebush Farm. In 1977, Phi Zeta honorary fraternity sponsored the first research day, recognizing original student research projects. In 1977, when the Veterinary Medicine Building and the Diagnostic Laboratory were completed and dedicated, the College was granted full accreditation by the AVMA. More than 22,000 volumes were carried by 150 students, staff and faculty to the new library.

Connaway Hall was remodeled again with the basement becoming a laboratory animal facility. In 1978, class size increased to 76. The first Veterinary Alumni Day was held in 1980. Dean Weide resigned in 1981, and Dr. Willard Eyestone was appointed interim dean. In 1982, Dr. Robert Kahrs became dean. Increased support from the University, the legislature, alumni and friends, and threats to accreditation led the college into a rebuilding phase. A span of sorrel draft mules was acquired as a focal point for public support.

Dedicated faculty continue to educate high quality veterinarians, achieve excellence in a wide spectrum of research, and provide a broad range of services to livestock and companion animal owners.

#### Historical Committee of the College of Veterinary Medicine:

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