

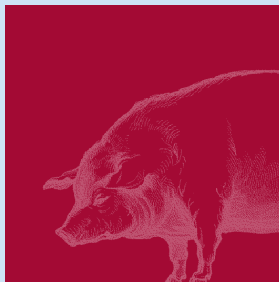
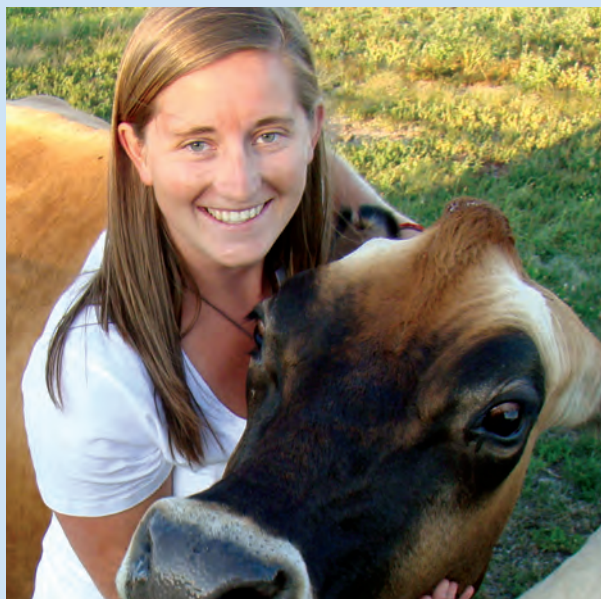
# bellwether



Penn  
Veterinary Medicine

THE NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

NUMBER 73 | FALL 2010



**Penn Vet celebrates its  
2010 World Vet and  
Student Inspiration  
Award winners**

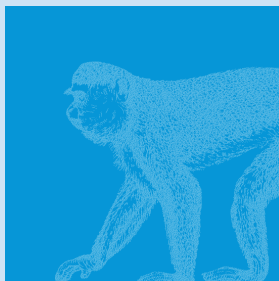


## Also in this issue...

*Update: Making History: The Campaign for Penn Vet*

The changing role of veterinarians in the 21st century

Upgrading our animals — a look at anthropomorphism



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# bellwether

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## about the cover:

The 2010 World Vet and Student Inspiration Award winners, from top left, clockwise, are Brittany Gross, V'13, Dr. Mo Salman, professor at Colorado State University, and Nikkita Patel, V'11. For the full story on these remarkable individuals who were honored this fall, see page 4.



# 2010 | World Vet & Student Inspiration Award Honorees

## *Pioneering the Profession*

BY KELLY STRATTON

**O**n Tuesday, September 28, 2010, Penn Vet celebrated its third annual World Leadership in Animal Health and Student Inspiration Award winners at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts on Penn's campus.

This year's World Vet honoree was Dr. Mo Salman, a professor at Colorado State University. Student Inspiration honorees were Ms. Brittany Gross, a second-year Penn Vet student, and Ms. Nikkita Patel, a fourth-year Penn Vet student who is enrolled in the school's VMD/PhD program. Each received a \$100,000 unrestricted grant to use toward realizing their veterinary missions and proposed projects.

In addition, Alan M. Kelly, The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, was honored with a surprise World Leadership in Animal Health Lifetime Achievement Award for his unyielding support and ongoing passion for the field of veterinary medicine.

"These awards are among the most prestigious and coveted in the world of veterinary medicine," said Joan C. Hendricks, V'70, The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "I am always humbled and impressed by the innovative researchers, thinkers and student and professional leaders in the field that are named recipients. Dr. Salman, Nikkita and Brittany are no exception and I congratulate each of them for this distinct honor."

The World Vet awards program was established with a major gift from the Vernon and Shirley Hill Foundation.



The 2010 award winners, from left: Nikkita Patel, Dr. Mo Salman, Brittany Gross.

Dr. Alan Kelly was honored with the World Leadership in Animal Health Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Call for Proposals and Nominations

Penn Vet student proposals for the 2011 Student Inspiration Awards as well as nominations for the 2011 World Vet Award are now being accepted. For more information to apply or to nominate a practicing veterinarian for his/her contributions to the profession, visit [www.vet.upenn.edu](http://www.vet.upenn.edu).

### A special thanks to the 2010 committees...

#### 2010 World Vet Award Committee

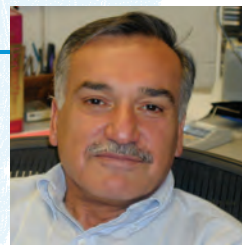
- Dr. John Albers, *Executive Director Retd., American Animal Hospital Association*
- Dr. Leland Carmichael, *John Olin Professor of Virology (Ret.), Baker Institute, Cornell University*
- Dr. Ron deHaven, *Executive Vice President, AVMA*
- Dr. George Gunn, *BVSc, MRCVS, PhD, CEO, Novartis Animal Health*
- Dr. Simon Harrus, *DVM, PhD, Dipl. ECVCP, Director, Koret School of Veterinary Medicine, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
- Dr. Leo Jeffcott, *Dean Emeritus, Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of Sydney*
- Dr. Alan M. Kelly, *Chair*
- Dr. Joseph Kornegay, *Director, National Center for Canine Models of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, University of North Carolina*
- Dr. Fred Murphy, *James W. McLaughlin Professor in Residence, University of Texas Medical Branch*
- Dr. Soledad Macarena Vidal Ogueta, *Directora Escuela Medicina Veterinaria, Universidad Mayor*
- Dr. Bernard Vallat, *Director General, OIE, World Organisation for Animal Health*

#### 2010 Student Inspiration Awards Committee

- Dr. Carla Chieffo, *President, Veterinary Medical Alumni Society*
- Dr. Peter Dodson, *Professor of Anatomy, Labs of Anatomy, Department of Animal Biology*
- Dr. David Galligan, *Director of VMD/MBA Training Program*
- Dr. Mark Haskins, *Department of Pathobiology*
- Dr. James Lok, *Professor of Parasitology*
- Dr. Rich Miselis, *Head, Laboratories of Anatomy Professor of Animal Biology*
- Dr. James Serpell, *Director, Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society*
- Dr. Gary Smith, *Chief, Section of Epidemiology and Public Health, Department of Clinical Studies – New Bolton Center*
- Dr. Sheldon Steinberg, *Professor Emeritus of Neurology*

### Dr. Mo Salman

Dr. Mo Salman, professor at Colorado State University, has been named the winner of the 2010 Penn Vet Word Leadership in Animal Health Award.



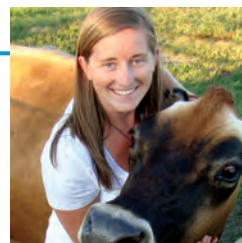
During his 37-year career in veterinary medicine, Dr. Salman has worked internationally in several capacities. His experience includes managing more than 160 scientific projects as principal investigator; serving as a member of the committee for Sustainable Global capacity for surveillance and response to emerging diseases of zoonotic origin within the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Science; serving as chairperson of the examination committee and continuing organization committee of the ACVPM. In addition, he has held ranking positions in the USAHA and has been serving on the Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel of European Food Safety Authority as well as on numerous committees and is affiliated with several professional associations.

In addition to his personal accomplishments in his veterinary career, Dr. Salman spent 31 years in an academic setting, teaching the next generations of veterinarians. He is also a well-published author with his work printed in the *American Journal of Veterinary Research*, *Journal of Dairy Science*, *Journal of Food Protection* and *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* among others.

Currently, Dr. Salman is a professor of epidemiology at the Animal Population Health Institute at Colorado State University. In 2009, he was named the recipient of the Alumni Achievement Award from UC-Davis, from which he earned his MPVM degree in 1980 and his PhD in 1983.

### Brittany Gross

**Brittany Gross, V'13**, a native of South Sterling, Pennsylvania, is a second-year Penn Vet student who earned an undergraduate degree from University of Vermont in biology.



"I'm different than a lot of vet students," she said, "in that I haven't always wanted to be a veterinarian. After graduating, I took time to explore my options. The global community has always fascinated me and so I figured traveling was a good place to start."

After college, Brittany spent a year teaching English in Thailand. And it's in Thailand where she realized the valuable symbiotic relationship between people and animals.

"Because I was starting everything new in Thailand, I was able to clearly recognize my curiosities as interests I never took the time to pursue," she said. "I was naturally really drawn to the livestock industry in Thailand. People live so close to their food source and are in tune with their animals; their yard is their pasture. That's when I gained a greater appreciation for the farm I grew up on back home and realized just how valuable animals are to us."

It was from that one year that another light-bulb went off for Brittany and she decided to pursue a career in veterinary medicine – as well as a project she sent a proposal in for consideration for the Student Inspiration Award.

"I want to do what I can to preserve this small-scale style of farming in Thailand, which I believe will provide for food sustainability and food security for the future. In addition, my ideas involve simultaneously empowering and educating women," she said.

According to Brittany, during her time in Thailand, she noticed that the sex industry is a problem.

"It's very prevalent," she said, "and it's very unsettling. Low income and lack of education are factors that are known to support this industry. I don't believe the sex industry is a product of inequality; women are valued members of society. The sex industry is tough to compete with – it allows for a lot of money to be made very quickly. However, the risks are high and I believe this option is ultimately the last resort for many women. There needs to be educational opportunities for women to stay in school and become excited for healthy career options."

And so, Brittany's idea for a Dairy Learning Center began to take shape.

Brittany's Student Inspiration Award-winning proposal involves constructing an educationally focused dairy farm in the rural northeast region of Thailand. The dairy would be the site of afterschool programs that provide hands-on involvement and instruction in herd care, raw milk handling and dairy product processing. The involved students would learn valuable skills in a facility that models methods and technologies that are known to optimize milk production and that are feasibly implementable by the farmers in the region.

Female students will be elected into leadership positions, the implications of their meaningful involvement, Brittany states, are to provide empowerment and education to

a demographic that is pivotal in increasing literacy and graduation rates of an entire population. Brittany outlines that the long-term goal for the country's dairy industry is less imported dairy products and increased domestic production as to ensure food security.

"Dairy farming is relatively new to Thailand, that is why education is so critical at this time," she said. "Rice farmers are turning to dairy as a more profitable practice and the Thai government is supporting new dairy farmers with start-up loans to encourage this transition. The issue is that the dairy industry in Thailand is largely composed of first-generation dairy farmers. Educational programs could prove to be very valuable to dairy farmers, as changes made may directly translate to increased profit margins. Areas that are important for instructional programs include animal husbandry, animal welfare and most importantly, feed nutrition."

Her plan, for the next three years, is to set the stage for success. Brittany has begun working with a vet school in Thailand to set the groundwork and relationship-building between the United States, Penn Vet and Thailand.

"After graduation, I plan to go to Thailand to arrange construction of the facility and begin the educational programs for nearby middle and high school students," she said. "I knew that I would return to Thailand sometime in my veterinary career; I am drawn to the culture and the country's dairy industry fascinates me."

And she is thankful for the opportunity to pursue her dream.

"I am deeply honored and incredibly excited to have been granted the means to initiate the project I have outlined a decade sooner than would have been realistically possible," she said. "This award is truly life-changing."

## Nikkita Patel

**Nikkita Patel, V'11**, a native of Knoxville, Tennessee, is a fourth-year Penn Vet student who earned an undergraduate degree from University of Tennessee and a master's degree in public health from Yale University.

"At Yale, I studied how diseases emerge and jump from humans to animals. I worked on this from the human angle, but I wanted to be more involved with the animal





## Planning Human and Veterinary Health

2009 Student Inspiration Award winner Katie Brinkley shares the progress she's made one year after being honored

By Katie Brinkley, V'I I, 2009 Student Inspiration Award Winner

For the past year, I have been enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design. The Student Inspiration Award made this degree possible, allowing me to bridge the unique disciplines of urban planning and veterinary health.

Peri-urban animal agriculture is a growing sector that has unique possibilities to augment local food security. Yet, there may be limits to sector growth, acceptable types of animal agriculture and beneficial contributions to local food security. Understanding of both animal and human health, along with planning for growth and development of cities, is paramount as more than half of the world's population lives in cities.

Before my PhD coursework began, I participated in the 2009 China Dairy program run by Drs. Dou, Galligan and Ferguson (see Spring 2010 *Bellwether*). The group was part of a consulting effort to examine planning, design and management for the burgeoning Chinese dairy system and provided an opportunity to learn about the rural farming systems that have sustained China for centuries and the modern, intensive urban farming systems that are being developed.

Similar urban planning tools exist in the United States (widely studied by my PhD adviser, Dr. Tom Daniels) and have greatly aided in farmland preservation.

When I returned to campus to start PhD courses, I expanded on this firsthand knowledge with courses in food systems, sustainability policy, geographical information systems, and farmland preservation.

In addition to course work, this summer I was a research assistant for a United Nations project under the guidance of Dr. Eugenie Birch of the Department of Urban Planning. This work took me to Nairobi, Kenya to work with UN Habitat on a new case study development application that allows rapid transfer of data and ideas. The work culminated with the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where I presented the research team's findings and attended many valuable meetings concerning food security and planning.

I am thrilled to have such an educational opportunity and I am grateful for the Student Inspiration Award, which has allowed me to combine the policy and planning aspects of food networks with veterinary medicine's expertise in animal health and management.

For an update on the other 2009 Student Inspiration Winners' project and their work with Heifer International, see page 10.



In Rocina, a slum or "favela" in Rio de Janeiro, Katie (right) poses with the head of the Department for Urban Planning Dr. Eugenie Birch.

side," said Nikkita, whose maternal grandfather ran a gaushala (cow sanctuary) in India.

Nikkita decided to pursue the VMD/PhD program at University of Pennsylvania where she will have the opportunity to continue to work with animals and with people and explore her interests of how human lives intersect with and impact animal lives and vice-versa.

"The Student Inspiration Award was so innovative and it spoke to exactly what I want to do, and, honestly, it was one of the big reasons I was drawn to Penn Vet," said Nikkita. "I have so many interests. I want to illustrate to people the ripple effects their actions and inactions can cause. Conservation is a passion of mine and I want to showcase wildlife and the consequences our actions have on them and us."

The tool Nikkita plans to use to educate people on their actions and lifestyles is the Internet – specifically Google Earth.

In her award-winning proposal, titled "Veterinary Public Health 2.0," Nikkita writes, "Veterinarians are evolving to have the responsibility of stewards of the planet. Within this role, it is our duty to educate the public on the depth and breadth of current problems that we are working to help solve, encompassing public health, conservation and environmental health. Web 2.0 will be used within this context to 1) re-empower the individual and 2) provide a powerful resource for policy makers."

Her planned starting point will be the collection of data to plot onto Google Earth maps, focusing in on Asia.

"Asia has a lot of threats, but not as much attention," she said. "Plus, culturally, I can understand the various viewpoints better, too."

The funds of the Student Inspiration Award will help Nikkita get started as will the experience she garnered during a summer spent at Google.

"Education of the public is something veterinary professionals are not very active in, yet is so important," she said. "I plan to visualize the problems of wildlife trade using Google Earth and show how devastating it is for wildlife, humans and ecosystems. Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Hill, I hope to harvest the power of the web to spawn a global movement for the wildlife trade and other veterinary issues. It is such a great honor to receive this award, which will allow me to pursue a project that represents a confluence of my dreams, personally and professionally," said Nikkita. ■