



Bellwether Magazine

Volume 1
Number 4 *Summer 1982*

Article 13

7-1-1982

Events

EVENINGS

August

14

Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Tour, New Bolton Center

22

Class of '77 Reunion. New Bolton Center

September

1

Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors begin classes

2

Freshmen begin classes

October

3

Delaware Valley Manchester Terrier Club. Allam House, New Bolton Center

19

Farrler Forging Contest. New Bolton Center

25

Fall SCAVMA Picnic. New Bolton Center

A schedule for Continuing Education Courses is not yet available. For information contact Elizabeth Caulk, School of Veterinary Medicine, 3800 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Phone: 898-4234

University of Ibadan

This spring the School of Veterinary Medicine hosted Professor **O. O. Dipeolu**, dean of faculty of veterinary medicine at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Professor Dipeolu met with the dean and with department heads to discuss closer cooperation and the possibility of developing joint research and educational programs between the two schools.

The visit was a direct result of the agreement of cooperation between the University of Ibadan and the University of Pennsylvania, signed in February 1981. This agreement, the most comprehensive one between an American and an African university, involves almost every school at the University of Pennsylvania. Robert Rutman, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry at the School of Veterinary Medicine, played an important part in bringing about the agreement. Dr. Rutman first visited Nigeria during 1973-74 to teach at the University of Ibadan. "When I was there it was clear to me that there were many areas where Penn and Ibadan could exchange scholarship on an equal basis," said Dr. Rutman. "There were other areas where they could use our assistance." He returned to Nigeria in 1978 as an external Ph.D. examiner for the University of Ibadan Ph.D. program. Prior to this trip he discussed the possibilities of an exchange program with Penn officials. In Nigeria he continued these discussions with officials and reported favorably to Penn's administration on the prospects of a formal exchange program. Negotiations between the two universities took several years, culminating in the signing ceremonies in February 1981 in Philadelphia.

For the Veterinary School the implications of the agreement are vast as they open doors to new areas of research, and, according to Dr. Rutman, provide the school with access to the worldwide network of health organizations. He explained that Nigeria, although rich in oil resources, has difficulty feeding its population of eighty-million people and must import meat and other foodstuffs.

Nigeria is attempting to raise food supplies by increasing livestock production. Cattle are

raised in the northern part of the country, and farmers in the south keep swine and goats. The government is encouraging the establishment of swine and chicken farms to increase their source of inexpensive meat, and is looking to its lakes and rivers as sites for fish culture. Stockfish, a salted, dried fish, is an important staple in Nigeria.

Professor Dipeolu discussed the possibility of establishing an aquatic veterinary medicine program at the University of Ibadan, similar to Aquavet. It would be the first in Africa and would be of great benefit to the marine industry which is beginning to establish fish culture on a commercial basis in the vast Niger delta.

The efficient raising of livestock in Nigeria is hampered because many tropical and parasitic diseases afflict and destroy animal life. Losses are great and cut deeply into food supplies. To combat these diseases and to conduct more research in causes and treatment, veterinary schools at Penn and Ibadan will consider cooperative studies in tropical veterinary medicine. "Here at Penn's veterinary school, we study comparative medicine. In other words, what do certain diseases mean for the animals which carry them and what do they tell us about human disease? The tropical environment in Nigeria will allow us to study some of these diseases with our colleagues from the university there," said Rutman. The field of animal nutrition is another area where the school here can be of assistance. Dr. Rutman also explained that interest in companion animals is increasing in Nigeria and that Penn could provide training and help in that field to University of Ibadan students.

The exchange of knowledge has already begun. Dr. Dudley Johnston, professor of surgery in the department of clinical studies, recently traveled to Ibadan to deliver a series of lectures. During the visit here, Professor Dipeolu held a full-day seminar on advances in controlling parasitic diseases of livestock in Nigeria. He also conducted a faculty seminar on veterinary education and the profession in Nigeria.

Dr. Rutman explained that the University of Ibadan, the graduate university of the

twenty-branch federal university system in Nigeria, was founded in 1948 as a British Commonwealth University. It began granting its own degrees in 1962 and presently has 8,000 undergraduate and 4,000 graduate students. The university trains the academic leaders of the country and anticipates an increase in graduate student numbers to 8,000. It is located near Ibadan, the country's largest city, on a 2,500-acre campus. The faculty is primarily Nigerian, educated in that country and in Europe. According to Dr. Rutman, the amenities offered the faculty are many. He recounted that the university provides nice spacious housing and that the campus has many recreational facilities and two international schools for the children of faculty. In order to attract and retain faculty of international status, he explained the federally funded university makes life on campus as attractive as possible.

Dr. Rutman is most enthusiastic about the cooperative agreement and he sees Penn and the School of Veterinary Medicine at the forefront of helping the University of Ibadan to become the leading institution in Africa. He also feels that the institution has much to contribute to Penn, particularly in the field of tropical diseases in humans and animals. He believes that researchers here will benefit from being able to observe first hand the problems and conditions in the tropics.

The relationship between the two universities will not only occur on a school-to-school basis but will encompass the interdisciplinary approach so prevalent at Penn. Dr. Rutman spoke of a March conference, that explored the use of medicinal plants in Nigeria. Participants included chemists, biologists, and anthropologists who studied, in depth, the pharmacological properties of plants indigenous to Nigeria and the powers of folk medicine still widely practiced there.

Future joint approaches will include the School of Veterinary Medicine. The prospects for Penn and Ibadan are exciting and far reaching.