



Spring 1994

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### Recommended Citation

(1994) "Vets' Role in Equine Airlift," *Bellwether Magazine*: Vol. 1 : No. 36 , Article 24.  
Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/bellwether/vol1/iss36/24>

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## Vets' Role in Equine Airlift

In October 1993 a massive equine airlift from Frankfurt, Germany to New York took place to bring competitors to Gladstone, N.J. for the 1993 World Pair Driving Championship. New Bolton Center veterinarians played a vital role to ensure that the 120 horses from all over Europe were free of disease and could enter the United States with minimal quarantine.

"All the horses had been pre-tested, prior to assembling at Frankfurt," explained Dr. Elaine Hammel, associate professor of medicine, and a member of the veterinary team. "But because they came from so many different countries and would be kept in close quarters on the plane, it was imperative to be sure that they were free of disease. Of particular concern was piroplasmosis, a tick-borne protozoan disease that destroys red blood cells. It is very rare in the United States and the European strain is quite virulent, so every effort is made to keep it out." If just one tick had been found by the veterinarians in New York, the entire plane load of horses would have been sent back to Europe. And that would have been the end of the event which was held on in this



*Dr. Elaine Hammel is surrounded by horse trucks as she inspects a horse outside the Frankfurt International Airport. Photo by Loren Fisher, The Courier-News*

continent for the first time ever.

Dr. Hammel was accompanied by Drs. Brad Bentz and Amy Dowd, residents at New Bolton Center, and Dr. Barbara Fomey, a Chester County practitioner. "We had to examine 120 horses for signs of disease and for ticks. We did that in Frankfurt and in Darmstadt, where some of the animals were stabled. Then, prior to loading, we again inspected for ticks and sprayed the horses lightly with a tick

spray. It was very busy." Did they find any ticks? Yes, one dead deer tick, not the specie that carries the disease.

The horses travelled in two groups on a specially outfitted Boeing 747. Horses were loaded into padded containers especially designed for equine transport. "It took six hours to load the plane," Dr. Hammel said. In addition to horses, the plane also carried carriages, equipment, grooms and drivers. In New York, everyone and everything was unloaded. The horses were checked by veterinarians and blood was drawn that was shipped to the laboratory at Ames, IA. Special arrangements had been made and test results were available in 24 hours.

Meanwhile the horses had been transported to Gladstone where a riding barn had been converted into a hermetically sealed, climate-controlled quarantine station. "The usual quarantine facilities were insufficient to hold that number of horses, so these special arrangements were made to accommodate the animals," said Dr. Hammel. "Once the results were back, the horses were moved to regular stables. All passed with flying colors." ■

## VHUP dedicates Hall of Great Living Legends

In Hollywood, the film industry immortalizes its movie greats on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. At VHUP, the newly created Hall of Great Living Legends honors in a similar way those special pets and show animals who mean so much to us.

The Hall of Great Living Legends is located near the examination rooms on the first floor of VHUP. For a gift of \$5,000 per pet, VHUP honors each Great Living Legend with a personalized plaque bearing both a photo and a verbal tribute. A gift of \$2,500 lists the name of the pet or show champion on a large tree-shaped plaque bearing the names of other small animals honored at this gift level.

The Hall of Great Living Legends was made possible through a gift from Drs. Hilary and Irena Koprowski. The Koprowskis provided the lead gift in



*Dr. Hilary and Irena Koprowski with Bary Suptine, director of VHUP (left) and Dr. Dan Bruckman who took care of Porthos.*

memory of their beloved canine companion, Porthos de Bellemour, and his valiant fight for life. His plaque reads: "He was the most faithful friend and companion his masters could have." The donors attended a special dedication ceremony at VHUP on March 4th to unveil the plaque.

Gifts from the Hall of Great Living Legends Program support the clinical research of junior faculty members, forming the nucleus for a sizeable endowment fund to provide stable, long-term funding for new clinical innovations and treatments. ■