



4-1-2005

We Got By With a Little Help From Our Friends!

Nancy West
University of Pennsylvania

We Got By with a Little Help from Our Friends!

By Nancy West

For the past 30 years, the owners of Rigbie Farm in Darlington, Md. have turned to New Bolton Center's George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals whenever they've needed care for one of the many Thoroughbred race horses and show horses stabled at their facilities. Last spring, it was New Bolton Center's turn to ask Rigbie Farm for help.

With the temporary shutdown of Widener Hospital looming large after an outbreak of multi-drug-resistant *Salmonella* infection, the School's sports medicine and imaging rotation was in serious jeopardy. Determined to save

being on the cutting edge, and New Bolton Center is certainly on the forefront of veterinary care.

"We were glad for the opportunity to repay them for all the times they've helped us on a moment's notice," Clark adds. "We often call with a horse that needs attention right away and they always accommodate us."

From May through August 2004, 15 students participated in four clinical rotations conducted by the School at Rigbie. "With more than 125 horses on the farm, the students got an exceptional amount of hands-on experience,"

"The people at Rigbie were extraordinarily generous with their facility and their time," **Jennifer Cohen, V'05**, comments. "They really catered to our needs and we felt fortunate to work with people who have such exceptional expertise. The learning opportunities we enjoyed went above and beyond compensating for the shutdown of New Bolton Center.

"Visiting the race track every week was definitely a highlight," she adds. "Having the opportunity to watch horses gallop alongside an incredible lameness vet, Dr. Ben Martin, was a phenomenal experience! All the students who rotated at Rigbie are so grateful to everyone at the farm and to the School's Sports Medicine faculty who worked so hard to make this wonderful rotation happen." ■



Sharon Clark and Liz Collard at Rigbie Farm in Harford County, Md.

this crucial rotation that is offered only in the summer, the Sports Medicine faculty developed an alternative academic plan, approved by **Associate Dean Jeff Wortman, V'69**, that would provide fourth-year students with an equivalent educational experience. To make it happen, they needed the help of Rigbie Farm.

Operated by owner Sharon Clark and manager Liz Collard, Rigbie Farm is a 326-acre equine care facility specializing in rehabilitation and reconditioning care, import and export quarantine, and breeding and reproductive services for a resident population of more than 125 horses and an annual transient population of more than 200 horses.

"When the folks at New Bolton Center asked if they could conduct their sports medicine and imaging rotation at our facility, we were honored," says Clark. "At Rigbie Farm, we like

notes **Dr. Virginia B. Reef**, Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam Professor of Medicine and director of Large Animal Cardiology and Ultrasonography. "Sharon and Liz took a tremendous amount of time to help us find a wide range of cases for the students to evaluate. They set up permanent-use stalls in their barn for specific procedures such as ultrasound and x-ray, and they provided space for our students to make their case presentations. They even hosted a barbecue for our students and faculty at the end of each rotation, Dr. Reef adds.

Feedback from students was also positive. "We enjoyed the diverse experiences we had at Rigbie. We saw a broad spectrum of cases, conducted in-depth pre-purchase exams, observed horses exercising at a race track facility, and even witnessed some castrations!" notes **Rebecca Linke, V'05**.

It Takes a Village . . .

It took a village of many private practices, individuals, and businesses to help support New Bolton Center's George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals during its temporary closure last spring and summer.

The Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center, located in East Amwell, N.J., was one facility that went above and beyond to care for sick and injured horses that might otherwise have been admitted to New Bolton Center (NBC). Mid-Atlantic was already experiencing a heavier-than-usual caseload before NBC closed in May 2004. To accommodate the overflow of horses they were treating, Mid-Atlantic decided to put a temporary tent with 15 stalls on their property. However, they faced significant challenges and expended considerable effort in obtaining the necessary zoning from the local township. Despite this, Mid-Atlantic was more than happy to help, says Peter Bousum, founder and president.

"We've looked to New Bolton for help in the past, and they've always been responsive to our needs and very gracious in accepting our patient overflow," Bousum remarks. "We were happy to reciprocate. We enjoyed working with New Bolton and look forward to our continuing relationship with them."