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Dean's Message

Joan C. Hendricks
University of Pennsylvania

This spring marks the beginning of a new tradition at Penn Vet, as well as the continuation of one more than 100 years old. In April 2008, we announced the very first winner of the prestigious Penn Vet World Award, which was created to increase public awareness of the critical role played by veterinarians in public health around the globe. I extend my sincere thanks to the sterling selection jury, led by **Dean Emeritus Alan Kelly**, which received nominations for candidates with an array of accomplishments that was astonishing. I am confident that as you read about our winner, Dr. Bernard Vallat, you will be as impressed as I was; as director general of the World Organization for Animal Health, Dr. Vallat's vision and leadership on areas that include threats to human and animal health and trade, has changed the practice and image of the veterinary profession on a global scale. Underwritten by the Vernon and Shirley Hill Foundation, the \$100,000 award both rewards the remarkable work of a veterinarian and publicizes the breadth of the work that veterinarians perform.

In addition to the World Award, two Penn Vet students each received \$100,000 in the first ever Student Inspiration Award competition. I know you will enjoy reading about them as well. The creativity, generosity and aspirations of our current students inspire those of us who have been veterinarians for many years; we can rest assured, the future is in good hands. We are a fortunate institution to attract and learn from such outstanding students—and this year we will celebrate the tradition of commencement, when we have the honor of graduating the 123rd class of Penn Vet veterinarians.

Our graduates are leaders who are influential in governmental positions and in industry; they are founding new businesses and making major new biomedical discoveries. Our very own **Jamie Thomson, V'88, GR'88**, has conducted pioneering work in the isolation and culture of human embryonic stem cells; his team recently succeeded in isolating pluripotent stem cells from human somatic cells. Our alumni are practicing globally, and are making a significant impact on clinical medicine, both in academic institutions and in private practice. We have much to be proud of as we near our 125th anniversary.

This is an exciting and challenging time. I continue to be warmed and touched by the generosity and gratitude of what I have called "Planet VMD." All of you who receive *Bellwether* are close to Penn Vet, whether by being an alum or by supporting our hospitals or special programs, or simply by working hard to make Penn Vet the premier institution it is—your contributions are vital to our reaching our goals. The University's capital campaign slogan says, we are "Making History." Given Penn Vet's history, there is only one possible path: To lead.

Thank you for your continued support.

—JOAN C. HENDRICKS, V'79, GR'80
THE GILBERT S. KAHN DEAN OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE

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Photo by Sabina Louise Pierce.