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# Dean's Message

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Since our earliest days, Penn Vet has been uniquely engaged with advancing our profession through our connection with fundamental biomedical science. I am proud to highlight in this *Bellwether* considerable evidence that we continue this tradition.

Our amazing community — faculty, students and staff — make history and change the face of veterinary medicine — and often the face of human medicine — with breakthroughs, new treatments and advanced therapies discovered through their unwavering curiosity and desire to learn. This curiosity paired with impeccable patient care in the clinics make Penn Vet an especially inspiring place.

Recently, one professor, in particular, has illustrated all that is possible at Penn Vet. Ralph L. Brinster, VMD, PhD has rightly earned his spot on the cover of this issue of *Bellwether*.

I am incredibly proud to call Dr. Brinster a colleague and supremely happy for his latest — and arguably most prestigious — award to date. Dr. Brinster was one of seven scientists selected to receive the 2010 National Medal of Science, for which he was honored at a gala event at the White House in October 2011. What makes this distinction so impressive is not just the fact that it is the highest honor any scientist can earn in the US, but that Dr. Brinster is the very first recipient who is a veterinarian. Indeed — a very happy occasion for the profession and for Penn Vet, in particular. His work over the past five decades on furthering the understanding of the mammalian germ line has laid the foundation for biologists since the 1960s and will no doubt leave a lasting legacy on the field for decades to come. You can read more about his exceptional career on page 4.

Penn Vet is also a leader in pioneering veterinary specialties. We led the charge in the creation of several of those specialties recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), including dentistry and oral surgery. On page 22, you'll read about our Dentistry and Oral Surgery Service at Ryan Hospital and, in honor of National Pet Dental Health Month, about the importance of oral care for pets. Our very own Colin Harvey, BVSc, has worked his entire career to advance the field of oral surgery and dentistry in our animal companions, which

has influenced the care available in the Ryan Hospital service, headed now by Alexander Reiter, Dipl. Tzt. Today, our faculty clinicians are the go-to experts in complicated oral surgeries and work to take their research to the clinics with much success.

Similarly, we are the first School to offer a unique equine home-care nursing program, Equi-Assist. Launched last year, the Equi-Assist program allows equine patients to receive follow up and continued care in their home barn or lay-up facility, which provides peace of mind for owners and a less stressful recovery for these sensitive animals. On page 20, read about the success the program has had in its first year, as well as about its plans for the future.

Penn Vet's comprehensive start-to-finish equine reproduction program, part of the recently renamed Section of Reproduction and Behavior based at New Bolton Center, offers clients expertise from stallion handling through fertility issues to intensive care for the at-risk neonate. On page 11, read about the many roles our collective expertise can play in bringing about the birth of a healthy foal.

Finally, I am thrilled to share that the Buerger Family Minimally Invasive Surgery Suite is open for business as of October. This impressive suite — the first of its kind in any vet school — allows clients to choose less invasive surgical procedures for their pet, which allows a quicker recovery and less pain. On page 8 you can read about one of our first patients, Basil, an adorable German shepherd puppy, who required a complex surgery to correct a genetic defect in his heart. As always, a team of Ryan Hospital clinicians, anesthesiologists, certified veterinary technicians and staff worked with an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure Basil's surgery was a total success.

This issue of *Bellwether* is full of examples of Penn Vet's revolutionary thought-leadership in the field of veterinary medicine. We are committed to our mission of leading the field and training its leaders. I am happy to be able to share these successes, advances and compelling stories so that you can also share the pride. Please join me as part of our pioneering future by attending one — or more! — of our upcoming events listed on the back cover. Whether you're a client looking for the most up-to-date treatment options for your pet, an alum hoping to earn continuing education credits, or a supporter of Penn Vet's broader mission of improving public health and safety, there is something for you to learn and celebrate as part of the Penn Vet family.

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