

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

*Office of the Dean
College of Veterinary Medicine*

*455 Veterinary Medical Center
1365 Gortner Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
Office: 612-624-6244
Fax: 612-624-8753
www.cvm.umn.edu*

March 1, 2010

Congressman Collin C. Peterson
Minnesota - Seventh District
2211 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Peterson:

I am respectfully submitting an Appropriations Request for your consideration for a federally-funded National Center of Excellence in Dairy Veterinary Education. The creation of Centers of Excellence was authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill (Title VII, Subtitle B, Section 7204-High Priority Research and Extension Areas) but not funded in FY10. The Minnesota National Center of Excellence in Dairy Veterinary Education would be an ideal choice for funding the first of these badly needed Centers.

The University of Minnesota considers this program a top priority and has made it one of seven appropriations requests from across the organization because of its critical importance to agriculture. The nation's leadership in veterinary medicine, including the American Veterinary Medical Association, has called for the creation of National Centers of Excellence in Food Supply Veterinary Education. The veterinary profession has called for consolidation of dairy education across the nation to reduce costs incurred by duplication across individual land-grant institutions and the college has created a Center of Excellence.

The funding would support a national veterinary dairy education program that will result in significant efficiencies and savings to veterinary colleges across the nation. Dairy veterinary education focused at one location can provide the infrastructure of facilities, cases, and access to industry partners which currently cannot be efficiently duplicated at the 28 US veterinary colleges. This will save significant educational expenses in veterinary colleges, especially those who only have a few students pursuing a career in dairy veterinary medicine. Streamlining the educational program would help veterinary institutions maximize their strengths and reduce costs.

There are few states that could adequately host this program. The site must be in a major dairy state, have access to all aspects of the dairy food system, and be hosted by a veterinary college with an existing strong dairy program. Minnesota has several distinct, unique strengths as a possible site to host such a center:

- a. First and foremost, the college has an affiliation with a large scale production and milk processing company, with on-site academic facilities (classrooms, teaching laboratories, information systems). This state-of-the-art residential education facility is embedded in a large commercial dairy in southern Minnesota. This facility is unique in the world and can house students on the dairy while providing outstanding access to clinical case material, advanced dairy management education, and experiences throughout the dairy food production and processing food chain.
- b. The College of Veterinary Medicine has strong programs in dairy education, research, and outreach. Outstanding faculty have experience in conducting collaborative educational programs with other veterinary colleges. The college is also experienced in providing web-based distance education as well as on-site education in a public-private partnership with a large dairy producer.
- c. The college is located in a major dairy state that ranks 5th in the national in production, with access to all aspects of the dairy industry including production, input infrastructure, food manufacturing, and international export companies.
- d. The college is the home of both the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety and the Department of Homeland Security's National Center for Food Protection and Defense and has close collaboration with the University's School of Public Health and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, enabling the proposed center to extend its programs to encompass food manufacture, food safety, and food protection.
- e. The college houses the Minnesota State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, bringing an nationally-accredited diagnostic and disease surveillance capacity to the project.
- f. The college enjoys close collaboration with the USDA/APHIS, FDA, CDC, MN Board of Animal Health, and the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources, tying our public health and food system defense programs into the federal and state agencies.
- g. Minnesota is a nationally central location with excellent transportation facilities.

The time is right to consolidate the education of our nation's dairy veterinary students in one central location to reduce overall education expenses at the nation's veterinary colleges and minimize tuition impacts to our graduates. Bringing together the top dairy faculty from multiple institutions to educate dairy veterinary students will not only benefit Minnesota, it will support the nation's need for well-trained veterinary professionals.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this project. Please let me know if I can provide you any additional details.

Sincerely,



Trevor R. Ames, DVM, MS
Diplomate ACVIM
Dean