

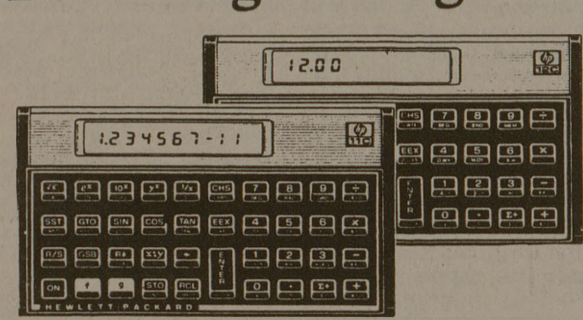
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Women's group gives support to water plan

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The \$1.43 billion Texas water plan picked up another big endorsement Monday, with the League of Women voters saying the proposal should lead to improved water quality and needed conservation.

However, the League said, the plan falls short on environmental protection and groundwater management.

"It was not easy to decide whether the glass of water provided by the water plan ... is a glass half full or half empty. But we have agreed on half full," said League president Lois Carpenter of Midland.

"In our view, the new water plan and the legislative package (that accompanies it) are steps that will move us father down the road toward meeting the state's water development needs," Carpenter said.

The plan would allow the state to issue \$980 million in bonds to fund water projects such as reservoirs, treatment facilities, flood control projects and other work.

The plan also would extend \$250 million of the state's credit to insure local water project bonds against default. Another \$200 million in state bonds would be used to provide low-interest loans to farmers buying water-saving irrigation equipment.

Gov. Mark White and legislative leaders are strongly pushing the plan. It has been opposed as too weak by some environmental groups, including the Audubon Society and the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, although the Sierra Club decided to remain neutral.

Carpenter said the League decided to endorse the plan despite its faults because, "This represents significant progress."

"But we emphasize that the glass in question still needs to be filled, and we will continue to lobby future legislative sessions for stronger positions, especially in groundwater management and in natural resources protection," she said.

Catherine Perrine of Dallas, the League's water analyst, said it is impossible to predict what voters will think of the plan.

"I haven't the foggiest notion what voters are going to do ... They're very nervous about approving large sums of money. It's just hard to say," she told a news conference.

Veterinary medicine
 Laboratory specializes in animal tissue analysis

By SHERI STEBENNE
 Reporter

"We don't do any treatment of animals," says Dr. A.K. Eugster, director of the Texas Veterinary Medical Laboratory. "If an animal comes in here, it's dead."

The Texas Veterinary Medical Laboratory is a service organization that aids Texas veterinarians, ranchers and animal owners in analyzing tissue samples for various diseases, bacteria or viruses.

"This lab is like a diagnostic laboratory for people," Eugster says. "Doctors send in specimens and we run the requested test or we test it in several of our labs to find out what the problem is."

When specimens are sent in, he says, most are pieces of the liver, lung, intestine or any other pertinent section of anatomy which will help identify the problem.

The diagnostic laboratory has several labs within it such as toxicology, virology, bacteriology, microbiology and histology. Each time a specimen is brought in, it is divided up and goes through each of the labs so that each possible option can be examined.

If the veterinarian is close to the Bryan-College Station area, he may send the entire carcass in and the lab will examine it and extract the necessary samples for testing.

Over 4,000 practicing veterinarians in Texas use the diagnostic laboratory for reaffirmation or for identification of problems or diseases.

Many times people will bring in animals that they suspect have not died from natural causes, Eugster says.

One of the more mysterious cases, he says, was one involving a horse insured for a large sum of money. The courts sent the carcass to the laboratory for evaluation. The routine tests showed nothing to indicate the cause of death, Eugster says.

Through more specific observation it was found that the horse had been suffocated with a plastic bag, a method which almost leaves no trace in the body, he says.

But Eugster stresses that most cases involve routine lab work.

The diagnostic laboratory is one of the largest in the country, Eugster says. The laboratory in College Station handled 60,000 cases in the past fiscal year.



Photo by KYLE HAWKINS
 Dr. A.K. Eugster, director of the Texas Veterinary Medical Laboratory, uses an electron microscope to examine tissue.

The laboratory, located on Agronomy Road in the Veterinary Medicine Complex, is a division of the Texas A&M University System. A branch office in Amarillo deals mainly with the feedlot and swine operations in the Panhandle. In the past year the Amarillo branch handled over 15,000 cases.

While the diagnostic laboratory is not officially connected with the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, he says there is a lot of exchange between the two. The Small Animal Clinic and the Large Animal Clinic both use the diagnostic laboratory for tests as well as joint consultations.

The laboratory employs a permanent staff of 85 with ten to 15 students working part-time and 22 professionals who hold either a D.V.M. or a Ph.D.

"The lab is open 365 days a year," Eugster says, "but that's misleading."

At night one professional and three laboratory technicians are on duty, but they are not in the laboratory. They're on call and have beepers for emergencies. On state holidays such as Labor Day, Christmas and the Fourth of July, the laboratory works with a skeleton crew of one or two professionals present and three technicians.

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