

Veterinary students receive hands-on training in prisons

By David Betz
Reporter

A few Texas A&M veterinary students actually volunteer for a trip and bars every week.

The students are involved in a program, run jointly by the A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Texas Department of Corrections, in which every senior veterinary student is given two chances during the year to spend a week from classrooms and work on prison livestock.

The prisons participating in the program are divided into two camps, the North and South pris-

ons. We would treat the animals and then eat lunch with the guards at the unit where we were working." Page said the students he works with travel about 500 miles each week, working at seven prison units.

Dr. Mark Young, the veterinarian who works with the students at the North prisons, said the units with livestock are almost self-supporting. About 45,000 people are fed by the TDC daily, Young said.

There are about 7,000 beef cattle, 1,600 dairy cattle, 2,500 sows and thousands of chickens on the prison farms, he said.

"We spend quite a little time with the swine herds, pregnancy diagno-

sis in cattle and maintenance of guard horses," he said.

Hajda said his group mainly treated wire cuts and saddle sores on horses and worked on the dogs used for tracking.

Kevin Hertel, a senior veterinary student, said the food and the living accommodations for the students were much better at the North prisons than at the South prisons.

"It was just like going to a restaurant for breakfast at the North prisons," Hertel said.

Hertel said he worked mostly with dairy cattle at the North prisons.

Hajda said the students work directly with prisoners, who restrain the animals while the livestock is being treated.

Hertel and Hajda both said they never felt threatened by the prisoners. Hajda said Page told the students what to expect in every situation.

Young said he has never had any

"The students get to see a well-organized livestock production program and they get some hands-on experience."

— Dr. Mark Young, veterinarian

problems with security or violence from prisoners who were working with the students.

"The inmates we work with are all trustys," Young said.

Young said A&M has had an agreement with the TDC since 1967. Young was on the staff at the A&M large animal clinic before he started working with the prisons in 1979.

"I was kind of the promoter of the program on campus," Young said.

Page said the TDC and A&M share the costs of the program. A&M provides two veterinarians and vehicles for them to drive to the prisons, Page said, while the TDC provides medical supplies and maintenance of the vehicles.

Martens said the TDC benefits by saving money through the use of volunteer veterinary services. And the program helps the prison farms increase productivity, he said.

Young said the program benefits the students.

"The students get to see a well-organized livestock production program," Young said, "and they get some hands-on experience."

The students find it a pleasant break from the classroom. They get a chance to get out in the air and work."

Hajda agreed that the practical experience he received was the most beneficial part of his visit.

"Dr. Page let us do all the work, which was fun," Hajda said.

Hertel said he enjoyed the attitudes of the veterinarians he worked with at the prison farms.

"It was just like real life," Hertel said. "The veterinarians would go with our diagnosis."

Jean Weishuhn, a senior veterinary student, said her experience at the prisons gave her a chance to see how the TDC works.

"I learned more about the prison system than veterinary medicine," Weishuhn said. "A lot of the ideas I had about prisons were wrong."

Young said he has never had any

Report predicts ethnic majority in Texas will disappear by 2015

WASHINGTON (AP) — Immigration patterns and low fertility will cause a dramatic shift in the ethnic composition of Texas in the coming decades, leaving no clear ethnic majority in the state by 2015, according to a study released Tuesday.

The report, written by economist Ray Marshall and demographer

Leon F. Bouvier, predicts that Anglos, who have been the dominant ethnic group in Texas since independence from Mexico 150 years ago, will lose their majority within 30 years.

"Texas may well be entering its most crucial phase of development since it secured independence from

Mexico 150 years ago," the pair state in their study. "Ironically, some of the issues of that era remain unsolved."

In 1985, Anglos represented 63 percent of the state's population of 16.5 million people, compared to 22.7 percent for Hispanics, 12.5 percent for blacks and 1.8 percent for Asians and other groups, according to the report.

But by 2035, when the state's projected population will be more than 30.2 million, Anglos will represent 43.4 percent of all Texans, Hispanics 39.3 percent, blacks 10.9 percent and Asians and others 6.4 percent, according to the report.

The study suggests the population shift will put increasing demands on the state's educational system as the school-age population becomes increasingly Spanish-speaking.

"Thirty years from now, young Hispanics will equal Anglos in numbers," the report said. "If current trends continue, black youths will comprise smaller proportions while Asian proportions will grow."

The growth of nearly 2 million students over the next 50 years will require 100,000 more teachers if the current ratio between students and teachers is retained, the study suggests.

Cities on Mexican border might face criticism of twin plants

EL PASO (AP) — Sixty delegates from 10 U.S. cities along the Mexican border met Tuesday to devise a strategy against congressional criticism of the twin plant program.

Twin plants, or maquiladoras, are U.S. factories in Mexican border areas that take advantage of inexpensive Mexican labor to assemble U.S.-made components.

Proponents say the plants make U.S. products competitive in the face of inexpensive Japanese items and provide employment to Mexicans in their own country, thereby helping to curb illegal migration into the United States.

But U.S. labor organizations have become more united in their opposition to the program, claiming that it

takes jobs from U.S. workers and exploits Mexicans.

Don Hagans, a former El Paso lawyer who is now legislative director for U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, was a delegate to the two-day Border Trade Strategies Conference. He said Congress must be shown the benefits the twin plants program has for both the United States and Mexico.

"If that vote is couched in Congress as a quota vs. union contest, I think we'll have a serious problem," Hagans said.

A congressional attack on the law started this fall with questions about the funding of a pro-maquiladora conference in Acapulco, Mexico, by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

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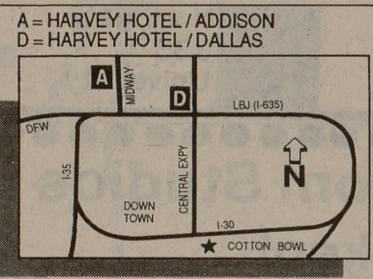
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