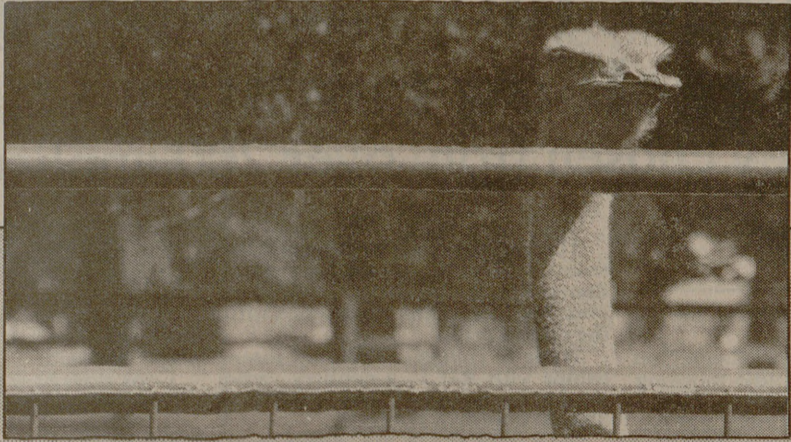


Friday, June 29, 1990



R Wildlife REFUGE



Ian Cooper, a summer employee and senior at Bryan High School, gives the fawns an afternoon snack from a large milk bottle.

Llamas and pigeons and deer —oh, my!

Texas A&M formally opened a wildlife and exotic animal clinic where these type of animals receive the care they need from students.

Dr. Jim Jensen, a clinical associate professor of zoological medicine, said A&M has studied wildlife and exotic animals in the past. The program, however, has grown so much in the past three years that A&M formally identified it as a new area of study in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The wildlife clinic receives animals in need of care from zoos and private ranches, as well as from individual pet owners.

"We get a good number of wildlife and exotic animal cases," Jensen said. "We treat a diverse group of animals — from hawks to snakes, from white-tail deer fawns to ostriches. Anything that is wild and is sick or injured, we will treat them."

The clinic is run similarly to any other veterinarian clinic, he said. However, the students and staff of A&M's clinic are responsible for finding new homes for the animals.

"Usually that means we release them back into the wild," he said. "We have had some animals that were hand-raised so when they're healed they won't do well released out into the wild."

He also said that when this happens, the Texas Park and Wildlife Reserve will arrange a home for the animals.

Because animal industries are developing around exotic animals, veterinary students need to be informed about these types of animals, he said.

Also, the students are learning more about avian (bird) medicine. Students and faculty keep the birds in a breeding situation so the clinic can expand its teaching capabilities and the students can have hands-on experience because of additional birds, Jensen said.

"Avian medicine is growing very rapidly," he said. "It is probably the most rapidly growing area in veterinary medicine."

Story by Elizabeth Tisch

Photos by Sondra N. Robbins



Ian Cooper (left) and Sue Brooks, receptionist at the clinic, work to lift Blackie, a male ostrich recuperating from leg injuries, into a standing position.