



**National Center for
Research Resources**

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

**Summary of the 2008 National
Veterinary Scholars Symposium
July 31 - August 3, 2008**

The views expressed in written conference materials or publication and by speakers and moderators at HHS-sponsored conferences do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government

Introducton

Over 450 people gathered on the Michigan State University campus July 31 - August 3 for the 2008 National Veterinary Scholars Symposium. This symposium — sponsored in part by NIH, Merck & Co., Inc. (a pharmaceutical company), and Merial (an animal health company) — brought together veterinary students from schools around the United States and Canada who are engaged in formal research programs. The Symposium was hosted by the Michigan State University and focused on veterinary students performing research in summer programs, combined degree students, post-graduate veterinarian-scientists, and more senior veterinary scientists. Attendees included more than 300 student trainees supported by NCRR's Division of Comparative Medicine institutional T35 grants or the Merck/Merial institutional grants, which are mostly awarded to veterinary colleges across the country. Each student scholar performs research for 10-12 weeks during the summer break.

Symposium Focus



There was a mix of large group presentations, smaller working groups, facility tours, and poster sessions. Each scholar trainee was expected to present a poster of his or her research work. The main audience for the posters was the other trainees and other mentors from different universities. (Over 90 faculty mentors attended.) One of the major benefits of attending this meeting is that it provides the opportunity for trainees considering a research career to meet research scientists and discuss crucial issues regarding career decisions with successful researchers and other student trainees interested in research careers. Some postdoctoral (D.V.M.) T32 program trainees attended and interacted with the scholar trainees. A special focus of the symposium was International Veterinary Medicine, as well as the varied career paths open to veterinarians in academic, corporate, and government research. Concurrent sessions also focused on comparative orthopedics, comparative oncology, laboratory animal medicine, infectious diseases, stem cells, and respiratory diseases.

Attendees

Approximately 335 veterinary students attended the symposium, including 25 combined degree students. Other attendees included 90 university faculty, 4 NIH scientists, and scientists from Merck & Co., Inc. and Merial. The conference this year was, by far, the largest of its kind and was made possible by support from many agencies including:

- National Institutes of Health (NCRR and NCI)
- Merck & Co., Inc.
- Merial
- American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- American Association for Laboratory Animal Science
- American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine
- American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine
- American College of Internal Medicine Foundation
- Michigan State University

National Training Opportunities

For information on national training opportunities for veterinarians, please consult [Career Development Opportunities](#), [Institutional Training Awards](#), and [National and Canadian Research Opportunities for Veterinary Students](#) . Highlights from the 2007 American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges Symposium entitled "Veterinarians in Biomedical Research: Building National Capacity" and a wide variety of additional information are available from the [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges \(AAVMC\) website](#) .