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UK's Gluck Equine Research Center celebrates 25 years of improving the health and well-being of the horse

By Jenny Blandford

LEXINGTON, Ky., (Feb. 1, 2012) – The Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center is celebrating 25 years as a named center focused on improving the health and well-being of the horse. The world-renowned Gluck Center, within the Department of Veterinary Science in the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, is the only scientific institute in the United States where virtually all faculty conduct full-time research in equine health and diseases.

Six of the 10 major vaccines currently used to protect against equine infectious diseases were developed by faculty in the Department of Veterinary Science. They are among a long list of other accomplishments with an international impact on equine research.

"The Gluck Center opened its doors 25 years ago, due to the generosity of Maxwell and Muriel Gluck and the horse industry," said Mats Troedsson, director of the Gluck Center and chair of the Department of Veterinary Science. "Landmark discoveries have been made in vaccine research and production, development of diagnostic tests for infectious diseases, drug detection in racing and performance horses, sequencing of the equine genome, identification and detection of genetic diseases and traits, parasite control and reproductive health and management."

The Department of Veterinary Science, established in 1915, has a long history of distinguished service. The Gluck Center capitalized on the department's strong foundation to reach major international equine research milestones including:

- Developed diagnostic serological tests for contagious equine metritis (CEM), Tyzzer's disease, equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM), equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy, strangles and equine viral arteritis
- Developed enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test for drug detection
- Demonstrated the usefulness of artificial lights and progesterone/estradiol treatments for hastening the onset of the breeding season

-More-

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- Determined the genetic basis for and developed tests for inheritance of certain color coat traits
- Provided leadership in the sequencing of the complete genome of the horse and structural characterization of horse genes
- Key part of a team from the College of Agriculture that performed the definitive experiments identifying the cause of Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome

The Gluck Center faculty continues to conduct equine research in six targeted areas: genetics and genomics, infectious diseases and immunology, musculoskeletal science, parasitology, pharmacology/toxicology and reproductive health.

The Gluck Center is also a World Organisation for Animal Health (O.I.E)-designated reference laboratory for equine rhinopneumonitis, equine influenza and equine viral arteritis.

"We are facing continuous and new challenges in equine health and well-being with the threats of new emerging infectious diseases, bacterial resistance to antibiotics as well as parasite resistance to dewormers, stricter regulations on medication for race and performance horses, an anticipated flow of genetic information through the sequencing of the equine genome, debilitating musculoskeletal injuries in the equine athlete and imminent threats to equine breeding industries by reproductive diseases and abortions," Troedsson said. "The Gluck Center is well prepared for these challenges and will continue to play an important role in the horse and veterinary communities. We are looking forward to the next 25 years with confidence."

Several events are scheduled in conjunction with the 25th anniversary. The year's events kicked off in January with the inaugural UK Ag Equine Programs' UK Equine Showcase and 3rd Annual Kentucky Breeders' Short Course at the UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Future events include:

- Grand opening of the UK Gluck Center Equine Reproduction Facilities Feb. 2 at Maine Chance Equine Campus
- Gluck Center rededication celebration July 12 at the Gluck Center
- Equine Research Hall of Fame in fall 2012

The mission of the Gluck Center is scientific discovery, education and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of the health and well-being of horses.

Groups or individuals wishing to tour the Gluck Center should contact Jenny Blandford at jenny.blandford@uky.edu or 859-218-1089. For more information on the Gluck Center, visit <http://www.ca.uky.edu/gluck>.

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UK College of Agriculture, through its land-grant mission, reaches across the commonwealth with teaching, research and extension to enhance the lives of Kentuckians.