

University of Illinois Department of Animal Sciences

History of the Companion Animal Program

1974-Present

1970's



Dr. Jim Corbin

1974: Dr. D. E. Becker hires Dr. Jim Corbin from Ralston Purina to establish the first companion animal biology program in the nation in a Department of Animal Sciences.

- Companion Animal Management (ANSC 207) established.
- Biennial Field Trip (ANSC 299) begins.
- Companion Animal Science Option included in the undergraduate curriculum.
- Kennel and cattery built on the South Farms for research.
- Collaborative research conducted with other faculty inside and outside the department.



Dr. George Fahey

1976: Dr. George Fahey is hired as Assistant Professor in the area of Nutritional Biochemistry in the Department of Animal Science, begins a research collaboration with Dr. Corbin. Four students receive M.S. degrees with an emphasis in companion animal nutrition.

1980's



Dr. Neal Merchen

1986: Drs. Neal Merchen and George Fahey restart the effort in companion animal nutrition research.

- Animal care facility for dogs and cats in Edward R. Madigan Laboratory (ERML) established.
- Companion, Recreational, and Laboratory Animal Science option added back to undergraduate curriculum.
- Dr. Neal Merchen organizes and teaches Companion Animal Nutrition (ANSC 322).



Dr. Gail Czarnecki-Maulden

1984: Dr. Gail Czarnecki-Maulden continues the program upon Dr. Corbin's retirement.

• Merger of Department of Animal Science and Department of Dairy Science into the Department of Animal Sciences in 1985 - abolishment of the companion animal undergraduate option.

- New animal care guidelines by the federal government necessitate new animal facilities. Lack of funds prevents construction and Dr. Czarnecki-Maulden departs for Friskies, St. Joseph, MO.

1990's



Susan Helminck, MS

2000: ACES Short-Term Investment Capital for Instruction allows for continued expansion of the companion animal program with the addition of Teaching Associate Susan Helminck.

Course offerings:

- Humane Education with Companion Animals (ANSC 215) established.
- Humane Education Seminar presented annually beginning in 1999.



Linda Case, MS

1990: Linda Case hired as a lecturer to lead the companion animal undergraduate teaching program.

Teaches:

- Human-Companion Animal Interactions (ANSC 205)
- Companion Animal Biology and Care (ANSC 207)
- Summer Internships (ANSC 293)
- Companion Animal Nutrition (ANSC 322)

2000's



Dr. Kelly Swanson

2004: Dr. Kelly Swanson hired as Assistant Professor of Comparative Nutrition in the Department of Animal Sciences.

Research areas:

- Macronutrient metabolism
- Intestinal health
- Appetite & obesity
- Nutrigenomics & metabolomics
- Nutritional effects on microbiome

Teaches:

- Companion Animal Nutrition (ANSC 422)
- Experiential Learning (ANSC 398)
- Advanced Companion Animal Nutrition (ANSC 526)



Dr. George Fahey

2001: Dr. Neal Merchen becomes Head of Department. Drs. George Fahey and Kelly Swanson continue the expansion of the companion animal program.



Dr. Amy Fischer-Brown

2005: Dr. Amy Fischer-Brown joined the Department as a Teaching Associate and Extension Specialist in Companion Animal Biology and Humane Education. This is the University's first companion animal-related Extension appointment.

Teaches:

- Companion Animal Management (ANSC 307)
- Companion Animal Policy (ANSC 370)
- Experiential Learning (ANSC 398): offers an opportunity to participate in the Champaign County Humane Society internship program.
- Animal Shelter Management (ANSC 407)

2010's

2007: Dr. Corbin passes away on March 1, 2007.

2010: Dr. Fahey retires but maintains a research program; forms a consulting business emphasizing pet animal nutrition.



2013: Establishment of the Dr. George Fahey Appreciation Club

This fund was formed to recognize the contributions of Dr. George C. Fahey, Jr. to companion animal science, to comparative animal nutrition, and to the American Society of Animal Science.



Dr. Maria de Godoy

2015: Dr. Maria de Godoy hired as Assistant Professor of Companion Animal and Comparative Nutrition in the Department of Animal Sciences.

Research areas:

- Ingredient and pet food evaluation
- Pet food technology and food quality and safety
- Therapeutic nutrition

Teaches:

- Experiential Learning (ANSC 398)
- Pet Food and Feed Manufacturing (ANSC 424)
- Principles of Pet Food Formulation (ANSC 499)
- Advanced Companion Animal Nutrition (ANSC 526)



Sarah Albert, MS

2013: Sarah Albert joins the Department as a Teaching Associate in Companion Animal Biology and Humane Education, with focus in areas related to the role of companion animals in society, human-animal interactions, and companion animal biology and care.

Teaches:

- Companion Animals in Society (ANSC 250)
- Human Animal Interactions (ANSC 305)
- Experiential Learning (ANSC 398): offers an opportunity to participate in travel experiences that include short field study trips during spring break and internships.
- Exotic Animals (ANSC 499; seminar series)

2017: Dr. Fahey retires from managing the labs and analytical services, which are now supervised by Drs. de Godoy and Swanson

2018: Non-thesis Master's Degree in Companion Animal Nutrition was created.

- Opportunity to broaden their education and training; expected degree completion in one academic year.
- Students will complete an Independent Study to apply scientific methods and communication skills and will have the opportunity to attend conferences related to companion animal nutrition and the pet food industry.
- Self-supported program; for more information:

<https://ansc.illinois.edu/graduate/requirements>