

JULY 2004 AGADEMICS

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Science teachers learn hands-on skills at vet lab

First they performed necropsies on antelope and collected tissue samples. Then they explored the “logys” of animal vertebrate disease: pathology, parasitology, bacteriology, histopathology, toxicology, and virology.

When high school science teachers from Torrington, Gillette, and Green River return to their classrooms this fall, they will be able to “show and tell” their students the hands-on skills they learned attending a week-long class in the biological sciences of vertebrate sicknesses at the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory in June.

Taught by faculty members in the College of Agriculture’s Department of Veterinary Sciences, the University of Wyoming program offered three hours of graduate credit for 30 hours of participative learning as well as access to photos, CDs, specimens, reference materials, and supply sources.

Assistant Professor Todd Cornish led the students as they completed necropsies on antelope, teaching them about mammalian anatomy and basic gross pathology involving the nature of disease and its causes along the way.

With Associate Professor Bill Jolley, who coordinated the course, they studied parasitology and the technical setup and use of compound microscopes.

During a session with Professor Ken Mills, the science teachers used plates they had prepared from the antelope necropsies to identify bacteria and parasites in the animals.

Associate Professor Don Montgomery helped the participants learn about histopathology, the study of microscopic anatomical changes in diseased tissues.

In Assistant Professor Alberto van Olphen’s laboratory, the students studied viruses and viral diseases. Professor Merl Raisbeck’s toxicology session instructed them on the nature, effects, and detection of poisons and treatment options for poisoning.

Also teaching the course was Professor Donal O'Toole, head of the Department of Veterinary Sciences and the state laboratory, who hopes to offer the program each summer to high school science teachers from throughout the state.

“The transfer of knowledge acquired in this course will enable pre-college students with interests and aptitudes in biological sciences to make informed decisions regarding career goals in veterinary or human medicine and related fields,” O'Toole says.

PHOTO CAPTION: Assistant Professor Todd Cornish shows high school science teachers participating in a course offered at the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory how to perform necropsies of antelope.