Letter from Dean Lonnie J. King

Dear friends and stakeholders:

Our third Focus-Forward Weekend, held July 19–21, 2012, at the Blackwell Inn at the Fisher College of Business, reflected both the ongoing evolution of this annual gathering and our goal to present a conference each year that targets topics of timely importance to the field of veterinary medicine.

Two years ago, we launched the Focus-Forward series with an analysis of the macro issues surrounding our profession. Last summer, we examined the financial underpinnings and challenges of veterinary medicine. This year, our conference theme was “Strengthening our Land-Grant Roots.” We chose this topic to honor the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, which created land-grant universities in the United States, as well as to examine the close and longstanding bond between Ohio agriculture and veterinary medicine.

This year’s conference examined four targeted subjects:

• Ensuring that Colleges of Veterinary Medicine Serve our Rural Communities and Food Animal Agriculture
• Building Strategic Partnerships with Ohio Agriculture
• Global Opportunities in Agriculture, Food Systems, and Veterinary Medicine
• Preparing the Next Generation of Veterinarians to Meet the Needs of Animal Agriculture

Our conference goals were to discuss the core tenets of each subject, generate ideas on how to address challenges and create opportunities, identify action steps the college can or should take, and link these recommendations to our college’s vision and strategic plan. This report summarizes the presentations by our featured speakers and the discussions that took place thereafter. Most importantly, it identifies the clear and specific action steps our conference participants identified for the college to consider.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in and support of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. I hope you will agree with me that this year’s Focus-Forward Weekend was another step forward in our work to keep the college at the forefront of our profession.

Respectfully,

Lonnie J. King, DVM, MS, MPA, ACVPM
Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Executive Dean, Health Science Colleges
Ruth Stanton Chair in Veterinary Medicine
Professor, Veterinary Preventive Medicine
Preface: The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862
Our Land-Grant Roots

On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act in response to a longstanding political movement to establish agriculture colleges in the U.S. Under the act’s provisions, the “several states” of the Union were allotted 30,000 acres each of federal land and funding, the latter based on the number of congressional officeholders according to the 1860 census.

Under the Morrill Act, each state was directed to use its allotted land for funds for “the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

Because the Civil War was then being waged, the act provided that “no State while in a condition of rebellion or insurrection against the government of the United States shall be entitled to benefit from this act.” After the war, the Morrill Act was extended to the former Confederate states and eventually to all states and territories created after 1862.

By the time the Ohio legislature accepted the terms of the Morrill Act in 1864, 19 other states had already done so. Champaign, Clark, Franklin, and Montgomery counties were the chief contenders for Ohio’s land-grant college. Ultimately, at the strong urging of Governor Rutherford B. Hayes, Franklin County was selected, and the Neil Farm—which was then a good distance north of Columbus and its potentially corrupting influences—was chosen as the site.

In 1870 the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College was founded and in 1873 welcomed its first 24 students. The college was renamed The Ohio State University in 1878. In 1885, the university’s Board of Trustees, fully cognizant of the important role veterinarians played in Ohio agriculture, established the College of Veterinary Medicine.

In 1887 the Hatch Act was passed, creating agricultural experiment stations and promoting researcher discovery. Later, in 1914, Congress passed the Smith Lever Act, which created the extension service to ensure community outreach and engagement. Collectively, these acts built the foundation for the comprehensive land-grant universities in the United States.
Background

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine embraces the unique and critical bond it shares with Ohio agriculture—the number one industry sector in the state’s economy at $109 billion annually. That bond traces its roots to the earliest days in university history.

Established in 1870 as a land-grant college with a primary focus on agriculture, the university created the Veterinary Medical College just 15 years later to help ensure that Ohio’s livestock would be adequately protected from infectious diseases. Ohio’s veterinarians continue to fulfill that role today, along with assuring the safety of our food supply and other responsibilities.

The impact of Ohio’s agriculture industry extends far beyond the dollars contributed to the state economy. The industry provides employment for nearly one million Ohioans, or one out of every seven jobs. About half of the state’s 75,000 farms raise livestock—and they do so in proportions that are among the largest nationwide.

More than 2.6 million “food animals” live on Ohio farms, along with another 30 million chickens and turkeys and 320,000 horses. Ohio ranks fifth in the nation in dairy processing plants and eleventh in milk production, eighth in pork production, second in egg production, and tenth in turkey production.

The college, which is ranked fifth among U.S. veterinary schools by *U.S. News & World Report’s Best Graduate Schools*, serves Ohio agriculture in a variety of ways. Some 85 percent of Ohio’s 3,500 veterinarians received their degrees from the college. These veterinarians work in 13 sectors ranging from zoos to biotechnical research and have contributed $3 billion to the state’s economy through the businesses they serve.

The Veterinary Medical Center on campus includes the Hospital for Farm Animals, as well as the Galbreath Equine Center and Hospital for Companion Animals. The college also operates the Ohio State Large Animal Services practice in Marysville, one of the few stand-alone large animal practices nationwide. These two facilities had more than 12,000 large animal visits in 2011.

This year’s Focus-Forward Weekend delved deeply into the evolving bond between the College of Veterinary Medicine and Ohio’s agriculture industry, focusing in particular on potentially critical next steps that can assure an even stronger relationship in the years to come.
Executive Summary

The moderate-to-extreme drought that plagued much of our state and nation in 2012 brought the challenges of farming and agriculture into sharp focus. This unfortunate “current event” provided a backdrop that underscored the timeliness and relevance of the discussions that took place during the college’s third annual Focus-Forward Weekend.

Months earlier, we had decided that Ohio agriculture—and the close, historic bond it shares with veterinarians and the College of Veterinary Medicine—would be the featured topic for the 2012 Focus-Forward Weekend. Our decision was sparked by the 150th anniversary this year of the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1862, which led directly to the establishment of The Ohio State University.

We were delighted to attract another stellar group of presenters to our conference, including David T. Daniels, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture, whose enlightening observations kicked off the first evening. Director Daniels reminded attendees that “there has never been a better time to be a veterinarian—or when the agriculture industry has had a greater need for the veterinary profession.” He also cited the overwhelming approval by Ohio voters in November 2009 of State Issue 2, which created the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board, as evidence of the strong interest Ohioans have in the care and well-being of livestock.

The conference’s first session was led by Dr. Andy Maccabe and focused on the critical need for vigilance in ensuring that the nation’s colleges of veterinary medicine (CVM) are meeting the needs of rural communities and food animal agriculture. His presentation touched on the challenges and opportunities facing veterinarians in rural settings. In particular, he offered suggestions on steps that colleges can take to recruit and attract more students to rural veterinary medicine practice, as well as how to adjust curriculum offerings to better prepare students for success in the field.

Dr. Bobby Moser led a discussion of the close relationship between agriculture and veterinary medicine that predated but was strengthened by the establishment of land-grant colleges following passage of the Morrill Act in 1862. In particular, he focused on the ever-increasing need for strategic partnerships between the two professions to meet both longstanding and emerging challenges. These include food animal welfare, the activities of animal rights organizations, global climate change, and emerging diseases.

Our prior Focus-Forward Weekend conferences have reminded us that, while the work of most veterinarians may be local in nature, the impact of the profession is felt on a global scale. Shaun Kennedy’s presentation touched on the global linkages among agriculture, food systems, and veterinary medicine. He noted that the predicted sharp rise during the 21st century in demand for food and proteins from animal sources will drive an increasingly close partnership between agriculture and veterinary medicine. Globalization, he observed, will spark renewed focus on such concerns as food system sustainability and the human-animal interface.

Dr. Leah Dorman offered an enthusiastic examination of Ohio’s agricultural landscape and the critical, evolving role veterinarians play in sustaining our state’s number one industry. Much of her presentation focused on the results of her survey earlier this year that looked into issues facing animal agriculture in Ohio relative to the veterinary profession. This survey of farmers, veterinarians, commodity officials, extension professionals, and others yielded wide-ranging suggestions on such topics as veterinary training and education, the veterinary needs of the “ag” community, and the skills and knowledge tomorrow’s veterinarians will need to be successful.

Each of these four presentations examined a distinct facet of the relationship that exists between Ohio agriculture and the College of Veterinary Medicine. And each contained numerous reminders of our ongoing obligation to fulfill the mission suggested by the overall theme of our conference—strengthening our land-grant roots.
Overview and Process

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine held its third Focus-Forward Weekend in Columbus on July 19–21, 2012. The conference began on Thursday evening, July 19th, with a reception, dinner, and keynote remarks by David T. Daniels, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Following were two days of lively, productive discussions arranged around four topics that explored key facets of the relationship between the veterinary medicine profession and the agriculture industry in Ohio.

Some 80 participants representing a variety of interests in those two fields took part in the three-day event. They represented the following categories (percentages are rounded):

- Faculty (including emeritus) (38%)
- Staff (17%)
- Students (17%)
- Private practitioners (9%)
- Industry (9%)
- Government (4%)
- Non-profit (4%)
- Clients/donors (2%)

Focus-Forward Weekend 2012 was driven by several primary objectives:

- Explore the dynamic and evolving relationship between the college and Ohio agriculture, viewed in the context of the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, which established land-grant colleges in the United States
- Generate ideas about how to strengthen the bond between veterinary medicine and agriculture in Ohio
- Recommend actions for the college that will build on and strengthen its connections to Ohio agriculture
- Integrate these recommendations and ideas into the college’s planning and mission

All plenary sessions were facilitated by Daniel J. Stone, organization change consultant. Facilitated table group discussions followed each of the four Friday presentations, with the goal of generating fresh insights into those
topics. A groupware computer system fed the highlights from these discussions in real time to a theme team of college staff members, whose charge was to distill the insights into summaries that targeted major and recurring themes, as well as special “gem” ideas.

Four discussion topics were chosen as most indicative of the relationship between veterinary medicine and the agriculture industry in Ohio. Each conference attendee received a personalized schedule for the Friday sessions designed to ensure that they shared the day with as many different people as possible. A facilitated table discussion followed each presentation, addressing the implications for the college of the information that was discussed, as well as actions the college might consider taking in response.

At the Saturday wrap-up session, four rounds of table discussions took place, with participants being asked to consider lists of primary recommendations distilled by the theme team from the four Friday discussions. Participants then voted by electronic keypad on their top three preferred recommendations for each topic.

Following the voting, attendees participated in a final set of table discussions to identify any additional strategies for the college that had not previously been mentioned or considered. Each table was asked to offer one or two such strategies.

Finally, attendees used keypad voting to evaluate the conference itself. Highlights of those results include:

• 79% reported that they agreed or strongly agreed to being satisfied with the conference outcomes
• 89% agreed or strongly agreed that the design and facilitation of the conference enabled participants to be productive
• 60% agreed or strongly agreed to being confident the conference will have a positive impact for the college, with 33% expressing a neutral feeling to the question

The conference adjourned shortly before noon. For a complete list of the recommendations and ideas generated during the conference, please go to vet.osu.edu/focus_forward.
Ensuring that Colleges of Veterinary Medicine Serve Our Rural Communities and Food Animal Agriculture

Dr. Andy Maccabe, Executive Director,
The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

Overview
Veterinarians in rural food animal practice in Ohio and elsewhere face a set of challenges that are different than those in companion animal and other veterinary practice areas. Financially, it simply can be difficult to make a living as a rural veterinarian. Second, the work often requires time-consuming travel to difficult-to-access places. Third, rural veterinarians must adapt to a different lifestyle—one that may not appeal to everyone. Finally, advances in veterinary medicine can translate to less need for traditional veterinary services in rural areas.

Many now believe that rural veterinarians need a stronger support system of paraprofessionals, marketing expertise, and ongoing assistance in adjusting to a changing practice environment. Other potential solutions to these challenges could include diversification—moving to more consultative services; entrepreneurship—finding ways to maximize profit while still contributing to community development; and technology—utilizing technology strategically to overcome access issues (telemedicine, smart phones, etc.).

Presentation Highlights
Meeting the challenges faced by rural veterinarians can be achieved by addressing several key considerations. For example, what kind of education in general does a rural veterinarian need? It may entail more study in comparative medicine, entrepreneurship, or animal welfare support/advocacy.

Critical tools for rural veterinarians could include better marketing capabilities, increased use of vet techs and paraprofessionals to expand the practice’s reach, and an expanded set of consulting services that might include nutrition counseling, water safety, or runoff control.

Diversified skill sets might encompass companion animal care, a better understanding of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, food safety (including plants and leafy greens), animal welfare awareness, and public and ecosystem health.

Currently, the student/applicant pool for CVMs is 75 percent suburban and 80 percent female, not the typical profile for a rural veterinarian. As a result, CVMs must shift toward more active recruitment of students for rural practice. Early targeted outreach to elementary and middle school students in rural consolidated school systems may help, and so might newer technology like social media and online programs and webinars.
Some ways in which CVMs can provide an improved education for rural veterinarians include integration of more diverse skills into the curriculum, sharing resources with one another, creating centers of excellence (some of which might focus on rural veterinary medical skills), and a flexible structure during clinical years to provide more public and ecosystem health preparation.

**Top Participant Recommendations**

- More opportunities for rural practice specialization in professional curriculum: 19%
- Increasing large animal exposure for all students in core curriculum: 44%
- Targeted and active recruitment of potential students: 56%
- Partnerships with Ohio State colleges and other professional organizations: 46%
- Partnerships with private practices: 50%
- Marketing—“selling the value of the profession”: 21%
- Addressing economic issues (student debt, loan repayment): 23%
- Providing post-DVM education in consulting roles: 19%
- Creating an area of excellence in dairy: 19%

**Conference Session**

*Building Strategic Partnerships with Ohio Agriculture*

*Dr. Bobby Moser, Dean, The Ohio State College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES)*

**Overview**

The three cornerstones of agricultural education in the United States—through teaching, research, and outreach—were the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land-grant universities; the Hatch Act of 1887, which established agricultural experiment stations; and the Smith-Lever Act of 1915, which established the cooperative extension service.

Because Ohio is home to a number of large urban centers, many people are surprised to learn that the number one business in the state is agriculture. In addition to being a top producing state across numerous livestock and crop categories, Ohio also enjoys strengths in other agricultural areas, including floral, grains, and food processing.
More than 330,000 Ohio youth are involved in 4-H, recently completing some 47,000 animal-related projects. This pool represents a great recruitment opportunity for the College of Veterinary Medicine.

It is critical for the college to strengthen partnerships at multiple levels, including partnerships with local, state, and federal legislators; with other colleges at the university; and within the community, state, nation, and world. These partnerships should help the college better prepare to meet existing and emerging challenges in such areas as food animal welfare, the activities of animal rights organizations, global climate change, and emerging diseases.

**Presentation Highlights**

A solid partnership has its challenges, including discovering what the other party wants and trying to provide it. Unilateral decisions are not helpful, and all parties must find the time to nurture a successful relationship.

CFAES signature areas include food security, production and human health; environmental quality and sustainability; and advanced bioenergy and biobased products. The Ohio State University has announced its three discovery themes: health and wellness, food production and safety, and energy and the environment. These programs offer key areas for collaboration and partnerships.

One area that is ripe for a stronger partnership between the College of Veterinary Medicine and CFAES is the need for more rural veterinarians. Certain regions of the state, in particular southeast Ohio, face a critical shortage of veterinarians.

The college might consider expanding its internal and external advisory groups, and more fully engaging volunteers. Building stronger partnerships with agricultural industries, commodity groups, and other stakeholders can lead to new opportunities as well.

Looking to the future, a host of emerging, critical, contemporary issues will drive the college toward more nontraditional partnerships. These issues include animal welfare, antibiotic resistance, food safety, world food security, nutrient loading, and environmental quality.

**Top Participant Recommendations**

- Create strategic plan for partnership development: 57%
- Build on and publicize existing partnerships/marketing: 29%
- Create a dedicated individual/office to coordinate partnerships/identify industry liaison(s) and liaison process: 73%
- Make incentives for partnerships for students and faculty: 35%
- Create more opportunities for students to create and participate in partnerships: 37%
- Include more partner participation in the curriculum: 37%
Global Opportunities in Agriculture, Food Systems, and Veterinary Medicine
Shaun Kennedy, Director, National Center for Food Protection and Defense; Associate Professor, Veterinary Population Medicine, University of Minnesota

Overview
Global food security is an increasingly critical challenge in the 21st century. In general, food security was defined by the 1996 World Food Summit as the point “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” Available data confirm, however, that the world is far from attaining that goal, with large portions of the populations in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia dealing with significant undernourishment.

As total global population continues to increase, it will be accompanied by a rapid corresponding growth in food demand. Agricultural and veterinary leaders around the world must be attentive to the “food continuum paradigm,” consisting of food security, safety, defense, quality, and protection. Potential intentional threats to the food supply include the global economic crisis and greed, economically motivated food adulteration, and terrorism.

The estimated cost of food-borne illness in the U.S. annually is approximately $77 billion, with approximately 50 million cases occurring each year.

Presentation Highlights
The Food Safety Modernization Act, signed into law by President Obama in January 2011, was designed to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by changing the focus of federal regulators from responding to food contamination to preventing it. The act is intended to result in the increased need for transparency in the food supply chain all the way back to the farm, which should further emphasize the importance of the role that rural veterinarians play in this arena.

Although global food security and protection will present job opportunities for veterinarians both in the U.S. and around the world, an immediate challenge for CVMs is to identify the financial resources that may be needed for new coursework to address these issues. CVMs must also find ways to raise the profile of food safety in their curricula. The message must be sent to young people considering careers in veterinary medicine that “vets do more than take care of dogs and cats”—there is literally a whole world of other opportunities.
Top Participant Recommendations

Create strategic plan for participation in global issues 35%
Recruit students and faculty with global and food interest/experience and increase financial support for this path 22%
Support veterinary education in developing countries 22%
Increase partnerships to support global food systems and “one health” 45%
Create a specialization or certificate in food safety or agribusiness 41%
Emphasize global opportunities in food systems in the curriculum 39%
Create external opportunities for students with global food production 45%

Conference Session

Preparing the Next Generation of Veterinarians to Meet the Needs of Animal Agriculture
Dr. Leah C. Dorman, Director of Food Programs, Center for Food and Animal Issues, Ohio Farm Bureau

Overview

Even though it ranks just 35th among states in size, Ohio is an agricultural powerhouse. At $109 billion annually, agriculture is the state’s top industry and is responsible for one in every seven jobs. Ohio is a top ten state in the production of eggs, veal, corn, soybeans, pork, and turkeys. And Ohio is a top five state in the processing of fruits and vegetables, bakery products, and animal food and dairy products.

Ohio’s agricultural strength has naturally led to the establishment of major nationally recognized food companies across the state, including Stouffers in Solon, Smuckers in Orville, Marzetti in Columbus, and Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati. Ohio agriculture also helps account for the location of major restaurant chain headquarters in the state, including Wendy’s, White Castle, and Bob Evans.

All types of farm operations exist in Ohio among its 75,000 farms. These include large integrated farms, traditional smaller farms, specialty (organic, natural) farms, and even a growing local movement of individuals growing some of their own food and raising “backyard livestock.”
**Presentation Highlights**

A recent survey compiled, distributed, and evaluated by Dr. Dorman yielded timely and informative results for the veterinary profession in Ohio. The survey was distributed to farmers, veterinarians, commodity executives, OSU Extension, regulators, and industry representatives.

Question one asked, “Relative to the veterinary community, what are the top three issues facing animal agriculture today?” Ranked in order of importance, the responses were controlling disease outbreaks, freedom to operate based on science, the concentration of livestock/consolidation of farms, feeding a growing human population with animal protein, lack of clients willing to pay veterinarians for large animal services, and the need for companion animal vets to understand large animal issues.

In answer to the question of what veterinary skills, knowledge, and aptitudes are needed to serve animal agriculture, respondents said skills in communication, diagnosis, treatment, and humane handling; a basic knowledge of large animals by all veterinarians; and familiarity with aquaculture and nutrition.

And when asked what animal agriculture needs from veterinarians, respondents’ answers included a continually improving understanding of animal health, more veterinarians available to serve rural communities, better communication skills, and a willingness to become involved in aquaculture—one of the fastest-growing segments of agriculture.

### Top Participant Recommendations

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Modify curriculum to prepare students for the current needs in agriculture</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>Redefine selection criteria and prerequisites to get more ag experience</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>More emphasis in recruitment on necessary professional skills</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>Promote continuing education and lifelong learning</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<td>Create appropriate paraprofessional programs</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>Recruit students to promote agriculture (early commitment programs)</td>
<td>49%</td>
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Additional Strategies

Overview
At the Saturday session, attendees were asked to consider other potential strategies for the College of Veterinary Medicine that had not specifically been mentioned during the four conference sessions. The top ten ideas that emerged are presented below in the order they were suggested. Attendees were asked to vote on their keypads for their top three choices. The graph below depicts the rankings by percentage of the ten new ideas.

1. Increase support in Extension 18%
2. Create a Center of Excellence in poultry 18%
3. Use tuition dollars to support teaching at the Marysville facility 20%
4. Promote an open house at the Marysville facility during the Farm Science Review 20%
5. Evaluate and make the case for paraprofessionals 34%
6. Create an advisory board to the college in rural practice and in each species group 44%
7. Establish a summer farm program for pre-first year students and first and second-year students 60%
8. Develop a networking event to explain opportunities available in rural veterinary medicine 26%
9. Seek student fellowships from industry, government, etc. 16%
10. Promote institutional specialization of CVMs 18%
Our first two Focus-Forward Weekends in 2010 and 2011 considered overarching topics that were just about as “macro” as they could possibly be. This year, we felt that the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act was of enough significance to establish a conference theme that was narrower in nature, focusing on the land-grant roots of The Ohio State University and the bond that was quickly forged between agriculture and veterinary medicine in the years immediately following the university’s creation in 1870. I personally felt that this anniversary offered us an opportunity to reflect on that bond and on how both the university and college have changed in the context of our land-grant roots. Our focus today is, of course, much broader than it was in the late 19th century, but the fundamental land-grant principles are still with us.

I also thought it was significant that, even though Focus-Forward Weekend 2012 focused on a much more targeted topic than its predecessors, the conversations shared during the conference truly touched on every aspect of our mission at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Each of our four presenters, along with our keynote speaker on Thursday evening, did a wonderful job of making sure that was the case.

As we looked more deeply at the material presented at this year’s conference and the recommended next steps, we found an interesting result. The most recommended next steps for topics one and three, which focused respectively on rural veterinary practice and global opportunities, were dispersed among three to five top preferences by fairly even percentages. This result mirrored the pattern we observed during our first two conferences.

However, for topics two and four—strategic partnerships and preparing the next generation of veterinarians—our participants were strongly united behind a single first-choice recommendation. In the area of strategic partnership, 73 percent of respondents felt the college should create a dedicated office or staff member to act as liaison in seeking new strategic partnership and working directly with industry. And in topic four, a remarkable 80 percent of respondents felt we need to modify our curriculum even further to prepare our students to meet the needs of Ohio agriculture. Some of these modifications could also assist in better training of new veterinarians for global food system opportunities in addition to Ohio agriculture possibilities.

We will certainly take all recommendations we received from conference participants for each session into our fullest consideration in the weeks and months ahead. But with such large majorities feeling so strongly about the two recommendations cited above, I believe we are almost certainly compelled to act. In fact, I believe the liaison idea could be a true game-changer for the college in the years to come.

Thanks one final time to everyone who made Focus-Forward Weekend 2012 the success that it was. We will keep you apprised of the progress the college makes in its wake as we go forward.