



News from the NCVP

Inside This Issue

NCVP Board Updates	2
Resident News	3
NCVP at AAVP	4
2025 Grant Recipients	5
Publication Highlights	6
Sponsors	7

Spring 2026 Highlight

A hearty congratulations to **Dr. Nicole Szafranski**, former Zoetis Resident in Veterinary Parasitology, who **passed the 2025 ACVM parasitology boards, attaining ACVM (Parasitology) diplomate status!**

Dr. Szafranski prepared for the board examinations under the direction of Drs. John Schaefer and Rick Gerhold at the University of Tennessee while also completing a PhD and pursuing several national and international training experiences.



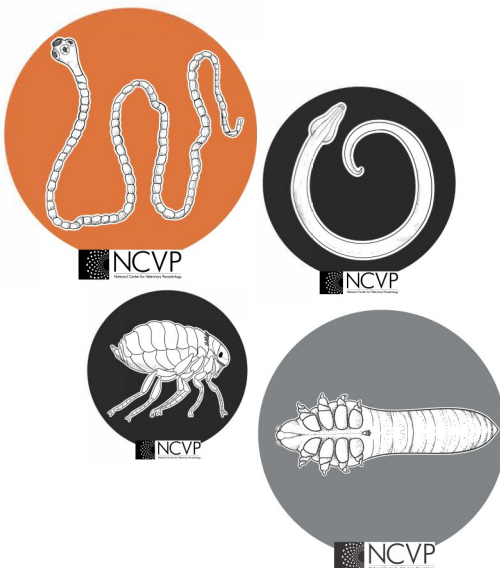
Dr. Nicole Szafranski
Former Zoetis Resident at The University of Tennessee

Board certification is a huge achievement, requiring considerable time and effort in focused study, and we are so proud of her accomplishment. Nicole plans to continue to dedicate her career to veterinary parasitology research and education, and we are all fortunate to have her on our team. See page 3 for more great news about Nicole.

Congratulations Nicole – and well done!



VISIT NCVETP.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CENTER



Drawings by Dr. Sarah Myers

Updates to the NCVP Board and Staff

The NCVP extends a warm welcome to new sponsor representatives in 2026!



Dr. Christian Leutenegger
Antech Diagnostics, Inc.

The NCVP is delighted to welcome **Dr. Christian Leutenegger**, Vice President of R&D Assay Development at **Antech Diagnostics**, to our advisory board. Christian received his veterinary doctoral degree from the University of Zurich and his PhD from the University of Bern. As an early pioneer and now veteran in the field of molecular diagnostics, he brings an incredible wealth of experience to the board. Indeed, Christian has been responsible for founding and leading highly successful core molecular laboratories at UC Davis, IDEXX, and Antech Diagnostics, efforts which have resulted in development of several innovative rapid diagnostic tests and discovery of a number of novel infectious agents. NCVP is grateful he is willing to share his expertise with us. **Welcome Christian – we are so glad to have you on the Board!**



Dr. Blaine Godley is a veterinarian and diplomate of The American College of Veterinary Microbiologists in Parasitology. He is on the Veterinary Technical Marketing team at **Boehringer Ingelheim** and has extensive experience in the veterinary industry. Before joining industry, Blaine practiced mixed-animal medicine, completed an equine internship, and was employed in a small animal private practice. Blaine's expertise in education and infectious diseases will be a true value-add to the NCVP Board. **We look forward to this opportunity to work with Blaine more!**



Dr. Blaine Godley
Boehringer Ingelheim

The NCVP hires an Assistant Project Manager



Rachel Smith
Oklahoma State University

We are thrilled to **welcome Rachel to the NCVP team** as a part-time **Assistant Project Manager** starting this Summer. Rachel is originally from Alabama but now resides in Oklahoma where she is days away from graduating with her PhD from Oklahoma State University. In her graduate studies, Rachel focused on significant, and understudied, feline vector-borne diseases.

As staff of NCVP, Rachel will be responsible for maintaining ongoing outreach endeavors such as finalizing the newest version of the **NCVP Parasite Image Database** which houses archives from Dr. Helen E. Jordan, Dr. Sidney A Ewing, Dr. Alan Kocan, Dr. Steph Heise, Dr. Becky Duncan-Decoq, Dr. Eileen Johnson, and Dr. Ellis Greiner. New images have been donated by Dr. Anne Zajac, Dr. Steve Jones, and Dr. James Flowers.

We cannot wait to work with you, Rachel!

Resident Alumni News

Three past residents have accepted exciting new roles in Veterinary Parasitology!

Dr. Daniel Felipe Barrantes Murillo, DVM, MSc, PhD, DACVP (Anatomic), the **former IDEXX Resident**, was in the second year of his two-year residency at Oklahoma State University,



Dr. Daniel Felipe Barrantes Murillo
Assistant Professor
Oklahoma State University

studying with Dr. Kathryn Duncan, NCVP co-director, when an incredible opportunity arose — based on his many strengths and contributions, Dr. Barrantes Murillo was invited to join the pathology faculty at OSU. Accordingly, Daniel is now an **Assistant Professor**, developing his research and teaching program while also preparing to take the ACVM board examination in parasitology later this year. Originally from Costa Rica, Daniel holds a DVM from the National University of Costa Rica and a MSc from the University of Costa Rica. Prior to joining Oklahoma State as the IDEXX Resident, Daniel completed both an anatomic pathology residency (DACVP, 2023) and PhD (2024) at Auburn University, focusing on heartworm infection in companion animals. As an Assistant Professor intently focused on both parasitology and pathology, Daniel is ideally positioned to provide the drive, insight, and vision to move both fields forward. **So happy for you Daniel!**

The NCVP is elated to share that **Dr. Ruth Scimeca**, Assistant Professor, Parasitology Section Head at the Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, NCVP co-director, and **former Bayer Resident in Veterinary Parasitology**, was recently named the **Krull-Ewing Professor at Oklahoma State University**. This position was created to recognize the many contributions of two legends in veterinary parasitology: Dr. Wendell Krull, a founding faculty member at OSU's College of Veterinary Medicine who elucidated many trematode life cycles in his career, including *Dicrocoelium dedriticum*, and Dr. Sidney Ewing, a leader in the profession who discovered and described life cycles for several tick-borne pathogens, including *Ehrlichia ewingii*, named in his honor. From 2005–2024, Dr. Susan Little held the Krull-Ewing Professorship and during this time helped co-found and lead the NCVP. Dr. Scimeca is a truly outstanding parasitology researcher, teacher, and mentor. We are excited to see her take on this new role as she leads OSU's legacy of strength in parasitology into the future. **Congratulations Ruth!**



Dr. Ruth Scimeca
Assistant Professor
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Nicole Szafranski, former Zoetis Resident, recently **joined the parasitology team at Zoetis in Veterinary Medicine Research & Development (Global Therapeutics)**. Dr. Szafranski completed both her DVM and PhD at the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine with residency funding from the NCVP. Her dissertational research focused on the epidemiology of *Toxoplasma gondii* in waterfowl and was completed under the guidance of Dr. Rick Gerhold. After finishing her education she joined East Tennessee Clinical Research, a contract research organization led by former NCVP board member and boarded parasitologist, Dr. Craig Reinemeyer. In 2025, Nicole became boarded in the parasitology subspecialty through ACVM. Nicole's new role at Zoetis will allow her to continue her efforts to advance veterinary parasitology. **We are so excited to see what the future holds for Nicole!**

Upcoming NCVP Events at AAVP

The annual meeting of the **American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists (AAVP)** will be held in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico during June 6–9, and the NCVP is excited to soak up the sun while we catch up with colleagues, hear the latest research, and participate in the silent auction! This year, we are focusing our efforts on two main events:



NCVP Table of Promotional Items

As always, the NCVP team of staff, board members, and residents are thrilled to attend AAVP this year and interact with our colleagues at the **NCVP Table of parasite-themed promotional and educational items!** In addition to our stickers, pens, and keychains, the NCVP will have a limited amount of “I (heart) parasites” T-shirts and parasite-covered socks to share!

While you are there, we would also love to discuss the upcoming grant cycle for the NCVP Small Grants Program, NCVP Residency Program, and the latest NCVP Case of the Month postings.

Please stop by during the breaks to interact with the NCVP team, including our current residents!



NCVP Resident Case Session and Afternoon Social



Dr. Vishnu Manikantan presenting at last year's Case Session

We invite you to join **six parasitology residents** from across North America on Monday afternoon as they present interesting cases, quiz the audience on their parasitology knowledge, and share their truly amazing parasitology images. **Dr. Mason Reichard, former NCVP co-director, and Dr. Jeba Jesudoss Chelladurai, former NCVP Resident, will be moderating our session.** We thank all the residents and former NCVP members for their participation and efforts to make this event a treasured part of the annual AAVP meeting.

Just prior to the Case Session, the NCVP is hosting an afternoon snack and drink break full of tropical treats and drink choices. **Make sure you arrive early to grab a delicious snack before the session begins!**

Advancing the Discipline through the Grants Program

The National Center for Veterinary Parasitology is pleased to announce the **recipients of funding for the 2025–2026 cycle of the Small Grants Program**. Following an intensive review process by parasitologists from across North America, the following projects were selected for their scientific merit, potential for clinical impact, and commitment to the NCVP mission of fostering the next generation of veterinary parasitologists.

- **Dr. Richard Gerhold**, Professor, Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences Department, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee
- **Dr. Thavy Long**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, McGill University
- **Dr. Graham Rosser**, Assistant Research Professor, Comparative Biomedical Sciences Department, College of Veterinary Medicine, Mississippi State University
- **Dr. Heather Walden**, Associate Professor, Comparative, Diagnostic, and Population Medicine Department, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida



Similar to previous years, a portion of this cycle's funding was made possible through our **ongoing collaboration with the American Heartworm Society (AHS)**, specifically targeting advancements in our understanding of *Dirofilaria immitis*. We **thank all our reviewers**—internal and external—for their time spent scoring applications and discussing the final selections.

The **Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2026–2027** funding cycle is currently open. The **deadline for submission is August 15, 2026**. Visit ncvetp.org to review the RFP and submission process. We invite all members of the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists (AAVP) to consider submitting proposals.

Questions and inquiries for more information on the Small Grants Program should be directed to the NCVP at ncvp@okstate.edu.



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NCVP
National Center for Veterinary Parasitology



Dr. Richard Gerhold
University of Tennessee



Dr. Thavy Long
McGill University



Dr. Graham Rosser
Mississippi State University



Dr. Heather Walden
University of Florida

Publication Highlights from NCVP Residents

Every Spring the NCVP highlights recent scientific publications from our current and recent residents. We are happy to share the following publications relating to veterinary parasitology:

Manikantan V, Pires dos Santos A, Dangoudoubiyam S. The expanding role of microRNAs in the biology and control of veterinary parasitic nematodes. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 2025.



Dr. Vishnu Manikantan is currently the **Elanco Resident** at Purdue University under the mentorship of Dr. Sriveny Dangoudoubiyam. His graduate work focused on common ascarids of animals. Vishnu recently completed his PhD program and is actively looking for other opportunities in veterinary parasitology while preparing for ACVM board examinations.



Smith RC, Barrantes Murillo DF, Mitchell J, Seetahal J, Davis R, Herrin BH, Wang C, Wood T, Duncan K, Burton W, Starkey LA. Seroprevalence of selected vector-borne agents in pet cats using the SNAP® 4Dx® PLUS, United States, 2022–2025. *Vet. Parasitol. Reg. Stud. Rep.* 2025.



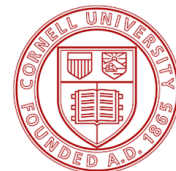
Dr. Daniel Felipe Barrantes Murillo is the former **IDEXX Resident** at Oklahoma State University under the mentorship of Dr. Kathryn Duncan. His postdoctoral work focused on canine leishmaniasis and other emerging parasitic diseases of animals. Daniel is now an Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University, and continues his preparation for the ACVM board examination this Fall.



Preuss A, Schwaha T, Kovalev A, Ebmer D, Herzog I, Lehnert K, Grass C, Freya Sandberg F, Hamann E, Zuber M, van de Kamp T, Gorb SN. The ectoparasitic seal louse, *Echinophthirius horridus*, relies on a sealed tracheal system and spiracle closing apparatus for underwater respiration. *Commun. Biol.* 2025.



Dr. Insa Herzog is the current **Antech Resident** at Cornell University under the mentorship of Dr. Mani Lejeune. She started her residency training last Summer, and her research will focus on *Fasciola hepatica* diagnostic challenges and methods to accurately determine infection status in a timely manner.



Each year, the NCVP Board is enamored by the residents' research output, teaching experiences, clinical service, outreach efforts, and training activities in preparation for the ACVM board examination. **Congratulations to all the residents on their many achievements!**

About the National Center for Veterinary Parasitology

Veterinary parasites impact human health and society in many ways. With the **generous support of our sponsors**, the National Center for Veterinary Parasitology works to promote greater understanding and control of parasitic diseases in animals through innovative partnerships between academia and industry.



Housed in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University, the Center strives to create future generations of veterinary parasitologists, conduct targeted research, and provide diagnostic and consulting services worldwide. To learn more, please visit ncvetp.org.



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This issue was written and edited by Kellee Sundstrom, Susan Little, and Kathryn Duncan.