

MEDIA RELEASE
ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE AT UPEI

Fish health presentations to be delivered by international experts

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (July 8, 2008): Fish health and the evolving role of aquatic animal health management on a global scale will be examined by 150 aquaculture, fish health, and bioscience experts from around the world during the Fish Health Section of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting. The meeting will be hosted by the Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island from July 9 to 12, 2008.

"This conference is significant in many ways," explains local organizing committee chair, Dr. Dave Groman of the Atlantic Veterinary College's Aquatic Diagnostic Services Unit. "Aquaculture is the fastest growing food sector and many regions of the world need fish protein as a safe, stable food source. Aquaculture is also a major industry faced with many issues that go hand-in-hand when dealing with living organisms in a dynamic environment."

"From a veterinary perspective, we need to better understand and apply the principles of veterinary medicine to aquatic animals," explains Dr. Groman. "From a diagnostic perspective, there is huge potential for significant benefits through increasingly specialized testing."

The meetings will center around four plenary sessions. The first plenary, Aquatic Animal Health: Veterinary Medicine's Contribution for Market Opportunities, will be led by Dr. Brian Evans, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Chief Veterinary Officer of Canada. The second plenary, An Overview of Captive Tuna Diseases, will be led by Dr. Ivona Mladineo of the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Croatia. Dr. Oystein Evensen of Norway's School of Veterinary Science will deliver the third plenary on Inflammatory Cells and Processes of Early Immune Response in Fish. The Atlantic Veterinary College's Dr. David Speare will deliver the final plenary session on Applications of Ultrastructural Pathology in Fish Health Diagnostics and Research.

"Furthering the science of fish health has considerable long term benefits for the world's human population and eco systems," explains Dr. Groman. "Our meeting will aggressively address the latest research and findings around fish health through almost 100 oral and poster presentations in four days."

The Atlantic Veterinary College at UPEI is regarded around the world as "the fish vet school" because of its expertise in aquatic species health. A number of Atlantic Veterinary College experts, including Dr. Dave Speare (who was recently awarded the Pfizer Excellence in Research Award, the Carl J. Norden Distinguished Teacher Award and is the principal investigator in the recent discovery of the world's first vaccine for a microsporidial gill disease), Dr. Fred Kibenge (who heads up one of only two OIE laboratories in the world for Infectious Salmon Anaemia), and Dr. Larry Hammell (Director of the Atlantic Veterinary College's wide reaching Center for Aquatic Health Sciences), will participate in the conference.

The Fish Health Section (FHS) was formed in 1972 and is the largest organization of fish health professionals in North America. Current membership is made up of nearly 400 fisheries scientists, veterinarians, researchers, regulators, teachers, and students - all of whom work together to promote fisheries and to help protect the health of wild and cultured aquatic animals.

This is only the second time in the Fish Health Section's history that it has held its meeting in Canada.

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