

**(September 8, 2010 □ □ Stillwater, OK)** – Two individuals from Oklahoma State University’s [Center for Veterinary Health Sciences](#) received top awards at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists held recently in Atlanta, Ga. Lindsay Starkey, Class of 2011, won best paper presentation and Stephanie Heise, DVM, received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award.

Starkey, one of 26 students from across North America competing, presented “Diversity of Hepatozoon spp. in Coyotes.” A fourth-year veterinary student, she is the daughter of Jeff and Carolyn Starkey of Valley Falls, Kan.

Starkey’s research focused on determining what species and strains of Hepatozoon are found in coyotes from Oklahoma and Texas. This work plays an important role in determining potential reservoir hosts that could be harboring the infection and spread it to the domestic dog population. Hepatozoon americanum is eventually a fatal, debilitating disease with no cure making prevention of this disease vital. According to Starkey there have been reports of Hepatozoon canis in North America, which causes less severe clinical signs and increases the need to know which species of Hepatozoon are endemic in Oklahoma.

“It was a privilege to attend the AAVP conference and present my research among a field of experts in parasitology,” says Starkey. “I am honored to be chosen for the best student paper presentation award.”

Heise is Veterinary Biomedical Sciences Ph.D. candidate and graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology at OSU's veterinary center. The American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists – Intervet/Schering-Plough Outstanding Graduate Student Award included travel and an opportunity to give a 30-minute overview of her research at the AAVP meeting.

Heise earned her DVM degree in Hannover, Germany. Her research on erythema migrans strives to identify novel mechanisms and agents of tick-borne disease.

"I feel very fortunate and honored to receive this prestigious award," states Heise. "The opportunity to open this year's student session and present my research was outstanding. I am very proud of being a member of AAVP."

Both students work in the Parasitology lab of Susan Little, DVM, Ph.D., Dipl. of the European Veterinary Parasitology College, Krull-Ewing Endowed Chair in Veterinary Parasitology and director of the [National Center for Veterinary Parasitology](#) .

"Oklahoma State has always been known for its strong and productive Parasitology department," says Little. "With such dedicated students, the future reputation of our program is in good hands."



Lindsay Starkey (far left), best paper presentation winner at the 2010 AAVP meeting, and Stephanie Heise, DVM, (far right), Outstanding Graduate Student Award recipient, with mentor Susan Little, DVM, Ph.D. (center), Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Oklahoma State University's Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The center's [Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital](#) is open to the public and provides routine and specialized care for small and large animals. It also offers 24-hour emergency care and is certified by the American Animal Hospital Association. For more information, visit [www.cvhs.okstate.edu](http://www.cvhs.okstate.edu) or call (405) 744-7000.

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