(March 3, 2011 Stillwater, OK) – Oklahoma State University's Center for Veterinary Health Sciences recently hosted a Camelid and Small Ruminant Owner Seminar for 75 llama, alpaca, goat and sheep owners. Some participants took a break from learning to make a special gift to the veterinary center. The Alpacas of Oklahoma (A-OK), a local affiliate of the national Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association, presented Dr. Katie Simpson with a $5,000 check.

The donation is specifically directed towards the center's Camelid and Small Ruminant Pilot Program and represents the first of what the A-OK Board of Directors hopes will be a continuing grant program.

"Each year members of A-OK host the "A-OK Blast Off," the first sanctioned show of the new year for camelid owners," explains Ed Downs, vice president of Alpacas of Oklahoma. "The event has grown over the last 5 years to the point where net revenues will support an ongoing grant program. We appreciate the fine work being done by the OSU veterinary hospital to support the growing camelid community in Oklahoma and are pleased to support the Camelid and Small Ruminant Pilot Program under the leadership of Dr. Katie Simpson."

Simpson earned her DVM degree from Texas A&M University in 2006 followed by an internship at OSU in 2007. She then completed a three-year residency in Food Animal Internal Medicine. Simpson recently completed the requirements to become a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and is currently a lecturer, specializing in camelid and small ruminant veterinary medicine in the Food Animal section, at the veterinary hospital.

In addition, TimberLake Farms alpaca breeder, Stephen Hull, PhD, and co-farm owners Kathy Reilly, MD, and Tom Cameron, DVM, donated $500 to the OSU program.

"We want to be able to sell our animals, make sure they have good care available and this program provides that for new owners," says Hull.

"We are so thankful for the strong and consistent support for this pilot program from the Alpacas of Oklahoma," says Simpson. "We truly do enjoy the opportunity to be able to focus on camelid and small ruminant veterinary care, both in the hospital and out in the field. It really allows us to expand teaching opportunities for our students, who will be the future veterinarians caring for these animals. We hope this program will continue for many years to come."

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 Medial 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 or call (405) 744-7000.

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