

BACK TO SCHOOL: VETERINARY RESOURCES AND LESSON PLANS FOR GRADES K-12

Autumn and the excitement of back-to-school time bring a renewed sense of enthusiasm for opportunities to interact with students in grades K-12. With a new school year comes invitations for professionals to make presentations and recommend resources, and who can resist asking the professionals who work with animals? No one.

Creating materials from scratch is labor-intensive, and it isn't where the expertise of most veterinary professionals, whether veterinarian or technician, lies. You want to provide what's been requested, and you want it to be grade-appropriate and reliable. Are free, reliable materials available online that you can use or recommend to others? You bet.

Lesson plans, teaching advice and other resources are offered online by a variety of groups. Choosing materials prepared by a group you trust is essential. With premiere programs in veterinary medicine, extension and education, it is no surprise that Texas A&M leads this list of programs and materials worth checking out. Unless specifically noted, all materials mentioned in this column are freely available, and all links are grouped together.

Texas A&M has year-round programs for K-12 students, including attending the spring Open House, summer Veterinary Enrichment Camp and guided tours.

The Texas A&M University Partnership for Environmental Education and Rural Health (PEER) program is a grant-funded initiative to both develop and deliver science content for middle and high schoolers. Of most interest to readers of this column will be the Veterinary and Science Partnership, which provides materials for teachers of grades 5-9 and veterinarians who make presentations. Teacher materials include lessons, videos and brochures. Resources for veterinarians focus on lowering the burden of creating a presentation from scratch by providing



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PowerPoint presentations to download and tips about speaking to these audiences. PEER also has a YouTube channel (PEER at TAMU) and a Facebook page. The YouTube channel has more than 200 videos ranging from interviews with scientists and veterinary students to procedures and lectures.

The National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense (FAZD) collaborates with PEER, and all materials may be freely downloaded. They developed a middle school zoonotic diseases curriculum for teachers that follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The site also includes zoonotic disease brochures for veterinary clinics. These are available in English and Spanish.

The Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD) cooperates with Texas A&M AgriLife to offer the Veterinary Science Certificate Program/Youth Veterinary Science Programs for students at participating high schools, 4-H programs or independently through self-study for those who are interested in becoming veterinary paraprofessionals or pursuing a higher degree in a veterinary-related discipline. The program enrolls more than 30,000 students a year. They also offer career day tours in College Station. Check the outreach section of the Youth Veterinary Science site for current details. There is a cost associated with this program.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) provides materi-

als for grades K-3, 4-6 and 7-12. These include lesson plans, career-related brochures, videos, comic books, PowerPoints and coloring activity books. Additionally, there are specially focused lesson plans, activities and presentations for National Pet Week. National Pet Week presentations include presentations and scripts in English and Spanish.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hosts two sites of particular interest. The Center for Veterinary Medicine Kid's Page primarily provides materials for elementary through teen students about a variety of pet topics and careers in veterinary medicine. Lesson plans for teachers are also available. Their Science and Research (food) site has teacher guides for middle level and high school classrooms about food safety and nutrition. [TV](#)

LINKS

TAMU-CVMA Open House

<http://vetmed.tamu.edu/openhouse>

Veterinary Enrichment Camp

<http://vetmed.tamu.edu/bims/future/veterinary-enrichment-camp>

Guided Tours

<http://vetmed.tamu.edu/about-us/schedule-a-guided-tour>

PEER

<https://peer.tamu.edu/>

FAZD

<https://peer.tamu.edu/FAZD/HomePage.asp>

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