



## UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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### **PRESS RELEASE 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003**

#### **Twenty years on and still going strong: the UFAW Vacation Scholarship awards promote a scientific approach to animal welfare at UK universities and colleges**

It is now twenty years since the scientific and educational charity the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) launched its vacation scholarship scheme. Since 1983, almost two hundred students have taken advantage of these awards, which provide funding for students at UK universities and colleges to carry out short research projects aimed at improving our understanding of animals' needs and how these needs can be met. Studies have been carried out in to the welfare of a wide range of species including : laying hens, laboratory mice, deer, free-ranging goats, dogs, hedgehogs, rabbits, tethered sows, chimpanzees, zebra finches, stall-housed horses and bottlenose dolphins. Many of the projects have subsequently been published in the scientific literature. One of the main aims of this scheme is to provide students with an opportunity to take a first step that may be helpful to them in pursuit of careers in animal welfare and UFAW is pleased that a number of past UFAW Vacation scholars (eg Dr Natalie Waran, University of Edinburgh, Dr Alison Hanlon, University College Dublin, and Dr Deborah Wells Queen's University of Belfast), have since become Vacation Scholarship supervisors themselves.

The 2003 Vacation Scholarship Symposium at which this year's scholars present their research findings is being held at the Royal Veterinary College on Wednesday 10th December. UFAW works closely with the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) and the HSA's 'Dorothy Sidley' Vacation Scholars have also been invited to present their studies at this symposium..

#### **SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE**

Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS  
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***If you would like further information about the UFAW vacation scholarships or the meeting at the RVC, please contact UFAW's Development Officer, Stephen Wickens (wickens@ufaw.org.uk).***

**Caption for attached photo:**

A study by Helen Ashby (a 2003 UFAW vacation scholar from Anglia Polytechnic University) into the prevention of bumblefoot in the endangered Northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*): showed that the use of feeding enrichment devices, such as the one pictured, promoted improved foot health by significantly reducing both the time the birds spent inactive and on perches; factors thought to contribute to the development of bumblefoot.

**Background Notes:**

1) The **Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)** founded in 1926, is an internationally recognised, independent, scientific and educational animal welfare charity concerned with promoting high standards of welfare for farm, companion, laboratory and captive wild animals, and for those animals with which we interact in the wild. UFAW works to improve animal lives by:

- promoting and supporting developments in the science and technology that underpin advances in animal welfare,
- promoting education in animal care and welfare
- providing information, organising meetings, and publishing books, videos, articles, technical reports, and the leading quarterly scientific journal *Animal Welfare*
- providing expert advice to government departments and other bodies and helping to draft and amend laws and guidelines
- enlisting the energies of animal keepers, scientists, veterinarians, lawyers and others who care about animals

2) The **UFAW Vacation Scholarship award** scheme was initiated in 1983 and aims to provide opportunities for students to develop their interests in animal welfare, encourage a scientific approach to the issues, and establish a starting point for further, longer-term research into improving the lives of animals. Over 190 undergraduate students have been awarded scholarships through this scheme, and submitted reports on their wide-ranging work to UFAW. Applications are now being sought for consideration for the 2004 awards. The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004.

***"Improvements in the care of animals are not now likely to come of their own accord, merely by wishing them: there must be research ... and it is in sponsoring research of this kind, and making its results widely known, that UFAW performs one of its most valuable services."***

Sir Peter Medawar CBE FRS, 8th May 1957

Nobel Laureate (1960), Chairman of the UFAW Scientific Advisory Committee (1951B1962)