CHAPTER 2

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development, for the purposes of this chapter, has to do with selecting, acquiring, and managing a wide variety of materials for the users of an academic veterinary medical library. The library’s collection is developed, evaluated and re-evaluated over time, according to an overall policy or plan. Collections in these libraries are very similar at their heart since basic needs are in each case dictated by the faculty, staff, and students of a college or school of veterinary medicine. At the same time, each library possesses its own unique collection that has been shaped around the specific professional and graduate course offerings and program requirements, research emphases and interests, organizational structure, physical facilities, and client categories served by the library that exist “outside” the institution, as well as the philosophies and preferences of the bibliographer responsible for the veterinary medical collection.

The typical library serving one of the 32 AVMA-approved (American Veterinary Medical Association) veterinary colleges or schools in the U.S. and Canada (1) is an administrative unit within the university’s library system rather than the veterinary college. As reported by the VMLS (Veterinary Medical Libraries Section, Medical Library Association) in its most recent survey of veterinary libraries (2) the most common type of library, comprising over half of the total of 32, is a separate library serving primarily a college (or school) of veterinary medicine. A less common type is a separate library that serves two or more curricula, such as a medical college plus a veterinary college, or an agricultural college plus a veterinary college. Less common still is a veterinary college served by two libraries: a campus library plus a clinical library.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Standards established by the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section (VMLS) of the Medical Library Association directly address the library’s collection in Standard #1 and refer to collections in most of the other standards as they apply to issues of professionalism, planning and resource allocation, space, and cooperation with other libraries (3). As indicated in these standards, veterinary collections include materials on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of animal diseases; zoonoses and public health; human-animal interactions; the practice of veterinary medicine; and the education of veterinary professionals. Standard #1 specifies that the collection supports the educational, clinical, and research programs of the veterinary medical institution, and that the library should collect information on veterinary medicine at the research level while related areas of biomedicine and clinical and animal sciences can be collected less comprehensively. Professional library staff will select, acquire, and withdraw materials with the aid of a written collection development policy, and they will evaluate the collection periodically. The VMLS standards touch upon collection development in other
parts of the document as well: a professional librarian with an ALA-approved master’s
degree or similar qualifications will be involved in the selection, acquisition, and
organization of veterinary collections; the veterinary library needs to have a say in the
allocation of financial resources in order to provide balanced collections and satisfy user
needs; adequate space needs to be provided for the veterinary collection; and the library
participates in cooperative programs, consortia, networks, etc. in order to supplement its
own collections. While a standard does not carry the authority of a policy, a body of
standards can serve a library as a useful gauge of its own performance and help it set
goals for future performance.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Dictionary for Library and Information Science defines a collection development policy
as a “a formal written statement of the principles guiding a library’s selection of
materials…” (4). Richards and Eakin suggest the following basic elements or sections to
include in a policy: introduction, definitions and responsibilities, selection criteria,
subjects, formats, special policies (to cover donations, multiple copies, retention,
preservation, collection evaluation, etc.), and special settings (audiovisual collections,
arival/historical collections, reference collections, etc.) (5). Due to the Internet, many
collection development policies are now readily accessible to a library’s users and staff,
as well as to other libraries and to anyone else who may be interested. At the national
level the National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Agricultural Library (NAL), and
Library of Congress (LC) have written a joint policy for veterinary science, describing
the collection interests and users services of each library, and in the case of NLM and
NAL, defining and comparing their collecting levels in 37 categories of veterinary
science (6). In the process of writing their own collections policy, a library task force at
Tulane University found numerous policies on the Internet. The task force discovered
that the majority of these online policies focused on specific disciplines and were
developed and maintained by the bibliographers assigned to that discipline (7). Iowa
State University Library is one example of an academic library that makes its collection
policies accessible via its Web site. ISU Library’s concise overall policy addresses
history, authority, selection, budgeting, formats, new technologies, scholarly
communication and other general issues. This main policy page links to another page
that in turn lists and links to about 75 specialized policies, most of which are subject
policies that correspond with academic departments/colleges on campus; some others
cover interdisciplinary subjects or programs, and there are a few other specialized polices
for government publications, media, newspapers, and reference materials (8,9). Included
is a link to a collection development policy for veterinary medicine, authored by the
Veterinary Medical Reference and Collections Librarian. The veterinary medicine policy
follows a common outline template for the subject policies. It includes information on
the professional (DVM) and graduate programs of the College of Veterinary Medicine,
general and specific collection guidelines, detailed subject areas covered, and resources
available beyond the library (10).
In applying the selection criteria as outlined in a collections policy, (need and potential use, scope, content, quality, currency, audience level, price, etc.), Richards and Eakin cite ten selection principles; the top three in the list all relate to Use/Demand/Need:

1. It is the most important criterion used in making a selection decision
2. It need not always be satisfied by an item in the local collection (in reference to access vs. ownership)
3. The selection process weighs it against all other selection criteria

Keeping the anticipated use of a book, journal or other item at the forefront of the selection process would appear to be a very commonsense and cost effective approach to collection building. The key to its success lies in the bibliographer’s knowledge of the curricular, research, clinical, and other needs of a particular veterinary college, along with the needs of any other major user groups served by the veterinary library.

The veterinary library’s collections policy, if kept up to date, can also be a great help in familiarizing a new librarian with collection goals and ideals. It can provide historical and organizational context; define sub-collections; and identify parameters and boundaries for subject areas, formats and types of materials, languages and audience levels. The policy also serves as a means of communication with its users. Having the policy online and readily accessible by anyone gives it the appearance (and hopefully, the reality) of a living document that is subject to ongoing discussion and revision.

LIBRARY USERS AND COLLECTION BUILDING

As indicated in the VMLS standards, selection of materials for the library’s collection is a professional activity. (See Chapter 3 for the technical services aspects of acquiring materials that have been selected for the library’s collection.) The selector or bibliographer often works with or invites input from many individuals in determining how to spend allocated funds for books, journals, and other library materials: veterinary college faculty, students, designated liaisons in the academic departments of the college, and the college’s library committee, if there is one. If the selector is fortunate, at least some college faculty, researchers, clinicians, and educators will have a natural interest in the library’s collection and offer frequent purchase recommendations for particular monographs and serial titles, or make suggestions for improvement in certain subject areas of the collection. Graduate and professional degree (DVM) students may also have useful recommendations based on their first-hand knowledge of the curriculum and their own perspectives of library strengths and weaknesses. All such purchase requests should be acknowledged as useful contributions to the selection process, regardless of whether the library can afford the item, or already owns it or has it on order. Each request is another piece of useful information that cumulatively and over time will give the selector a more complete picture of the needs of users and the overall strengths and weaknesses of the collection, than if he or she were “going it alone.”

Although the students, faculty, researchers, clinicians, and staff of the veterinary college comprise the core users of the library, there are some additional user categories that will
to a greater or lesser extent influence the selection process and the overall makeup of the collection. University faculty, staff, and students outside the veterinary medical college sometimes use the veterinary library, but they are typically looking for precisely the veterinary and veterinary-related items that are not held in the university’s main library or other branch facilities on campus, in other words, for items the veterinary library would be expected to already own. Or, these academic “outside” users may be searching for materials in interdisciplinary subject areas such as public health, zoonoses, bioterrorism, animal nutrition and reproduction, health and disease in wildlife and fisheries, biomedical engineering, etc. The selector will need to decide in each case if a recommended purchase is most appropriate for the veterinary library, or better passed on to another bibliographer in the university library system. (Of course, for those university libraries that serve curricula/colleges in addition to veterinary medicine, such as human medicine or agriculture, chances are greater that with their much broader scopes they will already own these interdisciplinary books, journals, and other materials.)

Among the non-university affiliated clientele of veterinary libraries, two relatively common user categories are veterinary practitioners and pet/animal owners. Practitioners are interested in up-to-date techniques, values, explanations, etc. that can be satisfied by current editions of the standard small- and large-animal clinical texts held by all veterinary libraries. However, the most recent editions of these are typically shelved in reserve collections with limited circulation, so these kinds of inquiries often turn into ones of ready reference, online search requests, interlibrary loan of articles or pages/chapters of books, or fee-based document delivery, rather than collection requests per se. Today there are many excellent free-access Web resources (Merck Veterinary Manual, Consultant, PubMed, etc.) as well as free, reasonably-priced, and membership-based services that cater specifically to veterinary professionals. A few examples of the latter are Veterinary Information Network (VIN), International Veterinary Information Service (IVIS), and AVMA Discussion Groups (American Veterinary Medical Association). As a result, veterinarians as a whole have become more self-reliant in their information seeking.

A second “non-affiliated” user category that has the potential to affect collection development in veterinary libraries is that of the pet/animal owner. Depending on a library’s policy and its patrons’ interest in this area, popular-level yet authoritative books and periodicals dealing with pet and animal diseases, health care, first aid, pet/livestock/poultry breed books, the human-animal bond and assorted other topics, can become a valuable and much-used part of the library collection. Some of these same titles may be requested by students and others in the veterinary college, who have dogs, cats, horses, birds, and other animals of their own, or they are looking for practical, understandable, and accurate books to read themselves, or to refer to their non-veterinary acquaintances. A large portion of these kinds of books are written by veterinarians or other veterinary professionals and most are quite inexpensive when compared to clinical or research-oriented texts, as little as one-tenth the price (11,12).
THE “TYPICAL” COLLECTION

It is difficult to come up with representative statistics for a “typical” veterinary library collection due to the several different types of libraries that serve the 32 U.S. and Canadian colleges of veterinary medicine. However, the “Collections” section of the 2000/2001 VMLS survey of veterinary libraries, the latest but now somewhat dated document, numbers for the reporting libraries in the Group 1 category show an average of slightly over 18,000 monographs held, over 14,000 journal volumes, 424 paid serial subscriptions, 102 additional serials received as gift or exchange titles, and 631 electronic serials (2). Group 1 is comprised of the separate (individual) libraries that serve primarily the colleges/schools of veterinary medicine, but not any other colleges or schools in the university. Survey reporting was not 100% as 4 of the 18 libraries did not submit data, and a few of the remaining 14 did not submit data in some categories. One might expect that a new survey would reflect changes caused by the continued shift to electronic journals, and the cancellations of at least some of the print counterparts of those same e-journals.

THE COMPONENTS OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The major components and characteristics of collection development will be discussed below, within the context of academic veterinary medical libraries: selection, handling gifts, deselection (weeding, withdrawals), physical facilities and shelf management, statistics, and preservation. Beyond a library’s own collection, there are issues of resource sharing that involve interlibrary loan, document delivery, and cooperative collection development.

SELECTION

At the heart of collection development is the process of selection, that is, choosing the specific materials to add to the library collection. Decisions are based on the selector’s overall grasp of the field of veterinary science and practice, the veterinary college and its operations, knowledge of veterinary publishers and sources, and specific purchase recommendations from college faculty, staff and students. While approval plans can ensure that the library will receive veterinary books from major publishers, a good deal of the professional and trade literature is widely scattered among small, specialized publishers or appears as meeting abstracts and papers from regional and local conferences, symposia, workshops, and professional organizations.

It is a safe bet that there will be a strong demand for veterinary titles from major, established sources such as CABI Publishing, Blackwell Publishing, and Elsevier, to name a few. And there will be considerable demand for veterinary titles from other U.S. and English-language publishers, simply because of the relevancy of the subject matter. Selecting materials for the collection becomes much more complex with non-veterinary subjects and topics that nevertheless relate in some way to the discipline. Some examples
are: human medicine and physiology, agriculture (especially animal science), zoology, microbiology, public health, food science, animal welfare and rights, wildlife and zoo management, among others. Again, this is where the selector’s knowledge of the veterinary college’s professional and graduate curricula, programs, research and teaching interests of faculty, clinical and laboratory testing services, etc. comes into play. This is especially true when operating with limited or declining acquisitions budgets, combined with the burden of steadily rising prices for monographs, serials, and other materials.

**JOURNALS: ONLINE OR PRINT?**

The major veterinary and veterinary-related journals are at or near the top of the library’s collection in terms of their importance, frequency of use, and amount of money and time spent on them by libraries. As with all materials in the collection, it is important to distinguish between veterinary titles on the one hand, and on the other hand, all titles appropriate for and acquired by veterinary libraries. The latter category is considerably wider in scope; beyond veterinary science it encompasses subject areas such as human and comparative medicine, zoology, animal science, and human-animal relationships. Two central issues here, as with many areas of science and medicine, are (1) price inflation and (2) the pronounced shift in holdings from print to electronic format, which contains its own pricing and budget issues. “Journal for Academic Veterinary Medical Libraries: Price Increases, 1983-2001” is the latest in a long line of veterinary journal price study articles published in The Serials Librarian. This article found that the price index for the core list titles (approximately 80 titles deemed essential to the veterinary medical library) rose more than 423 points, an average increase of about 23 ½ % per year for the period from 1983 to 2001 (13). Comparable increases were found for the adjunct core journals list (comprised of non-veterinary but valuable medical and science journals) and the abstract/index titles list. Other studies have confirmed the continued and significant rise in the prices of basic journals in the health sciences, independent of the rate of inflation (14). Veterinary libraries subscribe to many of these same health sciences titles, and they have not escaped their share of journal cancellation projects and restrictive serials and monographs budgets at the university level.

Few articles have been published that deal specifically with managing veterinary journal collections in academic libraries, nor with the acceptance of and switch from print to electronic journals by veterinary libraries and their users. A report of a 2001 survey of e-journal acceptance at Colorado State University details and compares responses of graduate students, faculty, and administrative professionals by college group (15). The survey, which included responses from the seven departments comprising the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, was conducted to determine degree of computer and Internet skills among respondents in using e-journals, the best mechanisms for accessing e-journals, relative preference of e-journals to print journals, and support for canceling print subscriptions duplicated by their e-journal equivalents. The results of the authors’ survey (now about five years old) were consistent with their literature review which indicated a continuous increase in e-journal acceptance and use. The College of Veterinary Medicine respondents as a group were frequent users of e-journals and offered
some of the strongest support for canceling print subscriptions and retaining the electronic versions only.

The 2003 International Conference of Animal Health Information Specialists (ICAHIS) produced a paper that relates the experience of the Medical Sciences Library, Texas A&M University, in moving steadily towards an e-journal collection (16). The library serves a large veterinary college as well as medical college and several other professional and graduate medical programs. Analyzing historical and current data collected by the library on print journal use over several years, the library found sharp declines in patron use of print journals, even in those titles where there was no accessible online equivalent. The authors anticipated a continuing and accelerating trend from print to electronic access. Another paper presented at the same ICAHIS conference verified the substantial use and acceptance of e-journals at Washington State University Libraries, which was accompanied by a relatively small number of uses for some of the same veterinary journals in print (17). The Health Sciences Library at Washington State, like the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M, serves a veterinary college along with several other medical programs and units on campus. As suggested by the title of the paper, the focus here was on comparing the online with the print versions of 14 veterinary titles. The authors found that the online and print versions of the same journal are often not the same in format, content, organization, usability, or convenience, and online alone is simply not enough in some cases. A third paper from the same conference discussed the challenges of managing electronic resources, especially e-journals, in regards to access and control of access, personnel and workload, volatility in coverage by resource providers, and overlapping coverage by providers of some of the same veterinary and biomedical titles (18).

Some excellent recent “big picture” and case-study articles authored by medical and other academic librarians for the most part confirm the observations and experiences of veterinary librarians regarding: the rise of e-journals and corresponding precipitous decline in their print counterparts; reasons why faculty may still use print journals; budgeting, licensing, and other journal management issues; library access considerations for current and archival journals; and the challenges libraries face in dealing with their new positions as gateways to (as opposed to warehouses of) journal collections and other library materials (19-24).

MONOGRAPHS

Monographs remain an important component of veterinary medical library collections, especially the textbooks used in the professional (DVM) curriculum, as well as some veterinary research-level texts. The current editions of the textbooks, frequently in multiple copies, are often kept in the library’s reserve collection to ensure their ready availability. Many of these same texts see double duty by faculty, students, and librarians as ready reference for quick lookup of facts, standard values, procedures, etc. Most libraries still maintain at least a modest reference collection that consists of general and subject-related dictionaries, specialized one-volume encyclopedias, handbooks, manuals,
directories, and similar materials. Many other monographs on veterinary and related
topics are selected for the library’s main book collection, primarily according to the
research, curricular, and general needs and interests of college faculty, staff, and students.
As with most other subject disciplines, the development of e-books has moved at a much
slower pace than that of e-journals. There would seem to be real potential for veterinary
textbooks used in the professional curriculum, as well as veterinary reference books,
installed in laptop, tablet and handheld devices, as a variety of new computer
technologies become commonplace in classroom and clinical settings. Some veterinary-
related books have been offered by publishers for several years in CD-ROM/DVD
formats, and online from e-book vendors netLibrary, ebrary, and others. There are some
excellent full-text, free-access books on the Web as well: The Merck Veterinary Manual
(25) from Merck & Co., Inc., and recent titles published by the National Academies Press
include Critical Needs for Research in Veterinary Science (26), Diagnosis and Control of
Johne’s Disease (27), Nutrient Requirements of Dairy Cattle (28), and numerous other
veterinary-related and biomedical books. At present printed books are much better suited
for reading cover-to-cover, but e-books offer ready access, capability of keyword text
searches, and convenience of printing selected pages of text, tables, charts, drawings, and
photographs.

PROCEEDINGS

In addition to journals and books, conference proceedings constitute a third type of
material of considerable interest to veterinary librarians and library users. Some
veterinary proceedings literature is readily available and routinely indexed by
bibliographic databases such as CAB Abstracts, BIOSIS, ISI Proceedings, and
AGRICOLA. A Web source that specializes in citing this publication type is the
veterinary conference proceedings database operated by Jean-Paul Jetté, University of
Montreal (29). Jetté’s site provides tables of contents for veterinary-related conferences
and in some cases links to the free, full-text papers. Conferences, meetings and seminars
held by highly specialized veterinary societies or other smaller organizations at the
regional, state, and local level may be more difficult to verify and obtain, up to the point
where they can truly be labeled “grey” literature.

GREY LITERATURE

Williams and Croft in 1997 discussed some of the challenges of dealing with the grey
literature of veterinary medicine (30). They named some of the features of grey
publications as lack of adequate bibliographic identifiers, small print stock with limited
distribution, and not widely acquired. The authors identified publication types that can
fall into this “grey” category: conference papers, workshop syllabi, society publications,
newsletters, reports, working papers, standards, theses, and government documents.
They noted some of the characteristics of grey publications: they provide practical
solutions to real problems, summarize knowledge for busy decision makers,
communicate new developments and experimental approaches, and they are fast. Such
materials are useful to veterinary students, faculty, and practitioners for these very reasons. The authors offer some helpful suggestions to veterinary librarians: make it your responsibility to identify and acquire grey literature for your geographic area, catalog the literature for your library, and cooperate with your fellow librarians in identifying, obtaining and loaning these materials. An article by Pelzer and Wiese analyzed over 2,000 articles published in 12 core veterinary journals in 2000, and determined slightly over 6 percent of the citations from these articles to be grey literature, the majority of it appearing as conferences, government publications, and corporate organization literature (31). They concluded that the shifting of information resources to the Internet was likely to result in less grey literature over time. This does not, however, relieve the librarian of the responsibility of identifying and procuring the hard-to-find items that may in fact be of considerable interest and value to the users of his or her particular library. In many cases the veterinary college’s faculty, researchers, and students can help in this process by bringing grey, or potentially grey publications to the attention of the library, and/or by donating substantive materials obtained from their attendance at some of the smaller, local, regional and less-publicized meetings, seminars, and workshops.

**AUDIOVISUALS/MEDIA**

Selection of materials such as videocassettes, audiotapes, slides, DVDs, CDs, CD-ROMs, computer software, etc. is usually the responsibility of the veterinary library and/or a biomedical communications department or similar office within the veterinary college. The Survey of Veterinary Medical Libraries in the U.S. and Canada 2000/2001 (2) shows a number of libraries in Groups 1, 2, and 3 were collecting both audiovisual and software items, with an average of over 2,400 audiovisual programs held by the Group 1 libraries. However, this mean number is skewed upwards by one library’s very large collection, and several libraries did not report this item. The Group 1 libraries in the same survey reported an average of 29 software titles. Several libraries likewise did not report in the software category. Some of these same materials or similar resources may now be available directly from the Web. Most veterinary medical libraries will link to at least some of these sites from their own Web pages.

**WHAT IS A “VETERINARY COLLECTION”?**

When discussing a “veterinary collection” it is important to keep in mind that there are at least two definitions of this term. The narrower definition relates strictly to the subject matter of veterinary science and medicine. This is primarily the material contained in the Library of Congress subclass SF, specifically SF600 – SF1100, Veterinary Medicine: veterinary anatomy, physiology, embryology, pathology, microbiology, epidemiology, parasitology, surgery, and pharmacology; communicable diseases of animals; veterinary medicine of special organs, regions and systems; etc.

A second, much broader definition of veterinary collections includes all materials that are obtained and managed by a library that serves a veterinary medical school or college, in
other words, all materials of interest and use to the students, faculty, staff, and researchers of a particular veterinary college, and possibly to non-college users as well: students and faculty from other colleges and programs at the university; veterinary practitioners, clinics, researchers, and those individuals who own or are interested in the care, health and diseases of pets and animals. This broader definition fully serves the curricular and research needs of the veterinary school and goes beyond those needs to serve other user groups outside the college. Subject-wise, in addition to the veterinary sciences it encompasses human and comparative medicine; animal science (livestock and poultry production); zoology; the human-animal relationship; animal welfare and animal rights; bioengineering; bioterrorism; managing a veterinary practice; or whatever additional topics may be needed or wanted by the full range of users of a specific veterinary library. At the popular level that may include books on pet care, dog and cat breeds, and raising horses, livestock, and poultry, and many other topics.

SELECTED AIDS AND RESOURCES

Veterinary librarians typically rely on a wide variety of selection aids, from conventional approval plans to book reviews and ads to recommendations from users. Much desirable material won’t be covered by approval or blanket order plans because it is highly specialized, comes from small publishers or in some cases is self-published, and meetings and conferences may be local or regional in nature, rather than national or international. Moreover, only a handful of the larger, mainstream publishers included in approval plans, such as Elsevier, Blackwell, and CABI Publishing are prime sources for veterinary materials, and even these may each release only ten or twenty titles or fewer in a given year, due to the specialized subject matter and its limited audience. While there are steady amounts of academic biomedical/life science/zoo-logy/agricultural titles coming on the market regularly from major publishers, the veterinary bibliographer with a modest budget needs to sift through these carefully and choose only those most appropriate for the veterinary library’s collection. He or she needs a good grasp of the veterinary college’s professional (DVM degree) and graduate curricula, and of its clinical and research interests, programs, and specialties. In addition, the general and specific requests of faculty, researchers, administrators, students and others can be invaluable in collection building, and should be routinely solicited and encouraged. This includes serials as well as monographs; even if there are no funds available in the budget for new journals; an ongoing knowledge of titles that faculty want and need is very important so these titles will be ready for purchase if and when new funds become available. Fellow librarians often share their discoveries or make recommendations of new, forthcoming or older titles, including their own critical evaluations. They may also routinely send out lists of duplicate books, conference proceedings, journal issues, or other items not needed by their libraries, to offer to libraries with similar collection interests. VETLIB-L (32) a mail list for veterinary librarians worldwide, is frequently used for these purposes. Tips from fellow librarians regarding elusive meetings, symposia, reports, training manuals, self-published and other “grey” literature are especially welcome.
Besides the bibliographer’s own knowledge and the expert advice received from others, there is a wide variety of selection resources to facilitate collection development. Detailed descriptions of in-print, new, and forthcoming titles are readily available from publishers’ catalogs, Web sites, and e-mail promotions and newsletters. Book reviews in veterinary journals, while not particularly timely for new releases, can provide the expert, critical viewpoint missing from publishers’ blurbs. A quick picture of titles available on a particular topic or by a certain author can be found in Books in Print and Medical and Healthcare Books and Serials in Print. There are numerous Web sites that list, describe, and sell new, used, out-of-print, and rare books and other publications. Amazon.com, Alibris, and other large sites offer a variety of veterinary academic and popular titles, old and new.

WorldCat (OCLC), RedLightGreen (Research Libraries Group), Library of Congress Online Catalog, British Library Integrated Catalogue, CISTI Catalogue (Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information), NAL Catalog (AGRICOLA, National Agricultural Library), and NLM Catalog (National Library of Medicine) are good examples of online catalogs that can be used to identify old and new publications of all types and formats. Also, there are the holdings catalogs of the academic libraries serving the 32 U.S. and Canadian colleges of veterinary medicine. Many of these catalogs contain the holdings of the entire library system, but it may be possible to restrict catalog searches to the veterinary library as a location, and even further to a specific collection, such as reference or reserve, within location. All of the above catalog examples except WorldCat (OCLC) are freely accessible to all via the World Wide Web.

Identifying core monograph and serial titles for veterinary collection building or checking an existing collection can be done by consulting a list of standard and classic texts. Although now somewhat dated, Keyguide to Information Sources in Veterinary Medicine (33) and The Literature of Animal Science and Health (34) can still be very useful, as can the more recent Using the Agricultural, Environmental, and Food Literature(35). The latter title includes a lengthy and detailed chapter on animal health and veterinary sciences written by Gretchen Stephens, Veterinary Medical Librarian, Purdue University. An excellent source for only the best of current, basic medical (but non-veterinary) texts as well as core medical journals was the Brandon/Hill list which originally appeared in 1965 and was regularly updated over a span of 36 years in the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association (36). Hundreds of core medical books and well over 100 core journals were grouped into dozens of subject categories. The Brandon/Hill lists were popular with veterinary librarians as a selection tool for essential, non-veterinary medical titles. The lists were officially discontinued in 2004 (37) and replaced later that same year by a modestly priced, Web-based annual from Doody Enterprises, Chicago, titled Doody’s Core Titles in the Health Sciences (38). Meanwhile, a veterinary librarian at the University of Saskatchewan, Jill Crawley-Low, was compiling her own much-welcomed, Brandon/Hill-style list of in-print, English language veterinary medical books recommended for academic libraries (39). More than 400 titles are identified, with prices, and arranged by subject. Crawley-Low’s bibliography is intended as an acquisitions and evaluation tool for veterinary medicine collections, and updates are planned. Although not comprehensive, it is a carefully considered selection of the core veterinary books of
today. A free-access Web version is searchable by keyword, author, title, publisher, and subject category (40).

**GIFTS**

Veterinary libraries will frequently be offered gifts, which are yet another means of expanding and enriching the collection. Gift offers come from the veterinary college’s alumni, faculty, staff, and students, and also from sources outside the college. Gifts may take the form of money or materials (monographs, serials, audiovisual items, etc.). The veterinary librarian will be directly involved in evaluating, selecting, and adding gift books and journals and similar items to the library’s working collection. However, this librarian at times may also become the initial point of contact for inquiries regarding rare and valuable books, personal papers, or money gifts/endowments. As such, a “front line” librarian needs to be alert to these opportunities that are above and beyond the immediate needs and interests of the veterinary library. This librarian may need to connect a potential donor to someone in the university archives, the university library’s special collections department, or the development officer of either the veterinary college or university library.

College faculty, staff, and alumni can be especially fertile sources of the many veterinary-related proceedings, symposium/workshop materials, reports, booklets, self-published materials, and other materials that are simply not available through regular library acquisition channels. What the library usually does not need, but is nevertheless frequently offered, are the outdated, well-worn, marked-up, stained, torn, and sometimes musty standard veterinary textbooks which it already possesses in multiple copies and editions. As a practical matter, however, it may be more efficient and considerate to graciously accept a large box of donated materials of dubious value, and sort through it later in search of the few potential items that could enhance the library’s collection. In the case of larger offers, the librarian may want to request in advance a written list of items from a potential donor, to avoid receipt of hundreds of unwanted books and journals. If it is evident that the offered materials are not appropriate for the library’s collection due to subject matter, format, age, condition, duplication, etc., a donor will still appreciate suggestions of alternatives from the librarian regarding other libraries, institutions, offices, or donation programs that might show an interest, especially local sources. An excellent and well-maintained Web site that lists, describes and links to numerous book donation programs worldwide, is maintained by the Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (41).

Except for smaller donations given anonymously, there ought to be a written agreement between library and donor. The document can be as simple as a short, standardized form signed by the donor, to serve as a written record of the transaction for both parties. For larger and more elaborate gifts, a more detailed contract may be necessary. A recent article from the library journal Collection Building provides sound basic information on handling gifts in academic libraries. The article reminds us that no gift is free; the price of a “free” gift may add up to about $45 per item, including library labor and processing costs (42). Most veterinary librarians would probably agree that this price would be a bargain in today’s market, for a slightly used text or a like-new review copy donated by a
DESELECTION

Deselection, or weeding, is the opposite of (and counterbalance to) selection. While this is not most librarians’ favorite activity, lack of physical space for a growing physical collection has in the past necessitated occasional, if not regular weeding projects. Besides the creation of new shelf space, other reasons are: identification and repair (or replacement) of volumes in poor physical condition; removal of duplicate copies and older/outdated titles; and removal of volumes that are simply not being used, based upon circulation numbers which are possibly supplemented by manual reshelving counts. Side benefits for the librarian include increased familiarity with the present state of the collection, as well as identification of specific titles and subject areas that need to be replaced or supplemented by newer editions or similar works. A recent JMLA article describes a comprehensive, long-overdue weeding project conducted by Briscoe Library, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. The project resulted the withdrawal of over 11,000 books and audiovisuals that represented nearly 10% of the library’s collections in these two formats (43). The article’s author cautions that a major project such as this one requires a great deal of staff time, which is easy to underestimate. Besides opening up shelf space for future collection growth, the author anticipated that circulation would increase because the newer materials on the shelf would now be more visible to users. Weeding does not always result in withdrawal; some cases may warrant transfer of an item to another library in the university system, or to a remote storage facility.

Depending on the eventual degree of acceptance of e-books by library users, some portion of print titles may eventually be replaced by their electronic counterparts, and new e-versions may be selected instead of print. In the near future, however, print journal volumes have a much greater potential for clearance of needed shelf space. Journal use statistics that were once gathered and reported for print journals (44) now are being used to lend support for purchase of more e-journals with a corresponding cancellation of print titles (16,23-24). Once a decision is made to cancel the print copy, it is only a matter of time until those volumes now duplicated by the new electronic subscription will be transferred to a facility in the library system with more shelf room, if not withdrawn outright. This shifting/removal/withdrawal is further accelerated by the availability of more archival online choices. Major journal publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, and Wiley are now making hundreds of individual titles available online back to their inception, and are offering large archival/backfile collections of online journals to libraries in “package deals.” The titles are often grouped into broad subject categories that include biomedical, agricultural, biological, and even veterinary themes. For example, as a result of the University of Arizona Libraries obtaining the complete Elsevier ScienceDirect backfiles during 2002-03, the Science-Engineering Library was able to withdraw thousands of print volumes, after first checking the e-journal versions
for missing content, poor image quality, and other problems. The Science-Engineering Library also withdrew print indexes that were now available online, and created an information commons in their newly freed-up space (45).

In addition to the scores of e-journals and databases offered by libraries to their users, hundreds if not thousands of quality serial publications, including research journals, are offered free to all via the World Wide Web. Free online access from a publisher may apply to older issues only, but sometimes includes recent and current issues as well. The question inevitably arises regarding the remaining usefulness to the library (and its primary clientele) of the thousands of neglected, dusty print volumes and issues being replace by popular online versions, now sitting untouched on rows of library shelves, occupying valuable library space. It is not difficult to imagine a time in the not-too-distant future when print volumes will require half or less of the space they occupy presently in a “typical” veterinary medical library. This new open space could be turned into more study areas for students, a meeting room added, some small group rooms constructed. Or perhaps an inviting browsing area for new books, journals, magazines and newsletters not likely to soon appear in electronic form, or are more amenable to browsing and using in person rather than online. If nothing else, a more attractive and user-friendly collection could be created by removing high, long, packed shelves; narrow aisles, and tight corners. At the other extreme, small libraries with very modest square footage could use the newly found space to bring in longer runs of print-only journals and magazines that are still in demand by the veterinary college; for example, they could decide to expand shelf retention of a popular veterinary or biomedical serial from the latest 5 years to the latest 20 years. Opportunities for library reorganization and redesign of a veterinary library should be similar to those for the university’s main library, except on a smaller scale.

**PRESERVATION**

Preservation may be a viable alternative to withdrawal or replacement of old or damaged materials that are judged to still add value to the collection. As a branch of the university library system, most of a veterinary medical library’s needed in-house preservation work may be the responsibility of a preservation department or office. A general, overall plan or program that considers environmental factors and potential hazards such as light, temperature, humidity, fires, smoke, flooding, etc., is likely already in place for the entire library system. A recent article from Journal of Agricultural and Food Information describes the development of a plan at the University of Tennessee’s Webster Pendergrass Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Library. A preservation action plan and timetable was developed in which the goals of Pendergrass Library were prioritized within the larger University of Tennessee Libraries’ plan. Plans tailored specifically for Pendergrass Library included a collections conditions survey, staff and user education, an anti-food campaign, a sprinkler system, and digital reformatting (46). Digitizing library materials can be yet one more path to preservation; applications for veterinary libraries could include Masters and PhD theses completed by students of the veterinary college;
publications of the college, its students and alumni; and a variety of other materials of veterinary, historical, and local interest.

COOPERATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Richards and Eakin define cooperative collection development in their book as an agreement between two or more libraries to coordinate their collection building activities in some way; reasons for cooperating include:

- More effective use of existing materials budgets
- Coordinating cancellation, storage, or preservation projects
- Establishing primary collection responsibilities for specific subjects and formats
- Acquisition of collective site licenses for databases of common interest

Such cooperation could occur formally or informally between the veterinary (branch) library and the university (parent) library, between/among university libraries (which could result in involvement by veterinary libraries as parts of their respective university libraries), or between veterinary libraries directly. The nature of cooperation between veterinary libraries can be as simple as offering and/or requesting from each other specific books, proceedings, issues/volumes of journals or other serials; sharing bibliographic and acquisition information on new or out-of-the-ordinary veterinary publications including grey literature; and recommending specific titles or “hot” topics for collection. Moving from ownership to access, veterinary librarians may facilitate interlibrary loan and document delivery between libraries. In fact, the mailing list VETLIB-L (32) serves as a communications channel to a group of veterinary librarians worldwide for all of these collections activities.

The Veterinary Medical Libraries Section (VMLS) (47) within the Medical Library Association is another important source for discussion and cooperation in collection building. VMLS communicates with CABI Publishing (48) and other publishers and vendors of veterinary materials, regarding products offered (books, journals, databases), their content, available formats, ease of use, potential or actual value to library clientele, pricing issues, etc. VMLS Standard #6 encourages library participation in cooperative programs with other libraries, consortia, networks, vendors, and agencies (3). Many cooperative programs deal with collections in particular.

The kinds of cooperation referred to above are important for reasons of economics and library quality. To remain effective and relevant to its users into the foreseeable future, an academic veterinary library will also have to keep in close touch with its primary users’ needs, and the plans and goals of the veterinary college its constituents. The library will need to find proper balances among print, electronic, and other format types; between in-library resources and those offered remotely; between library ownership of and access to materials; and maintain quality collections with limited budgets.
NOTES

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