Pharmaceutical Companies Host Junior Veterinary Students

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Fifty-two junior students, four wives, and three instructors were the guests of Eli-Lily and Company in Indianapolis, Parke-Davis and Co. in Detroit, and the Upjohn Company in Kalamazoo from February 29th through March 6th, 1976. This was the annual pharmaceutical tour for juniors in veterinary medicine during Iowa State’s winter quarter break.

The week long trip gave the students an opportunity to observe the facilities where drugs are researched, formulated, produced, and marketed. Through a series of tours, lectures, films, and panel discussions, the Iowa State guests began to appreciate the enormous amount of money and time which must be spent to place and keep a drug on the market. In addition to this, the students could relax and enjoy one solid week of hospitality offered by the drug companies.

Through the cooperation of the three companies, the class observed the process of making new drugs. At Parke-Davis, the class toured the company’s research facilities where organic chemists continually create and weed out thousands of new compounds in search of one which might fulfill all the requirements of a new drug for consumer use. Amazingly enough, the practical use of NMR spectrometry, gas chromatography, electrophoresis, and all those other techniques one learns about in organic chemistry and biochemistry were in actual demonstration.

A tour of Eli-Lilly’s Toxicology Division showed the group what happens to a new compound with potential pharmaceutical value. Various tests carried out on lab animals are used to determine tissue residues and teratologic effects on animals. These studies are essential to demonstrate to the FDA that the said drug is safe and effective as required by law. Both Eli-Lilly and Upjohn provided bus tours through their research farms which showed potential new drugs being tested in target species.

All three companies gave tours of their product manufacturing plants where cleared drugs are produced in mass quantities as tablets, powders, or liquids. Throughout the manufacturing process tour the guides stressed quality control as a major objective to insure the consumer of purity and potency of any product.

The Iowa State group also attended films and lectures concerning the veterinarian in industry and how the veterinarian should market his professional services. Panel discussions dealt with company philosophy and answered individual questions.

Most evenings, the host company sponsored a hospitality cocktail hour followed by a six course banquet. Morning tours and discussions were followed by lunch in the host company cafeteria.

Other extras provided were theatre tickets, passes to a professional basketball game in Detroit, and hot tips on action spots of the city, which led to a night of dancing at “Dirty Helen’s” or bellying through the crowd at “The Toppers.”

Three instructors, Drs. Shires, DeYoung, and Greve, accompanied the students by their invitation.

The class of ‘77 hopes that those upcoming juniors will plan to attend next year’s drug tour. It is one you’ll never forget.

*W. Seglar, a member of the junior class, was the coordinator of the pharmaceutical tour. He was assisted by a classmate, Roger Gibson.