

(1914?)
THE EXTERNAL PARASITE FIELD LABORATORY
OF THE ZOOLOGICAL DIVISION, B.A. I.
1942-----1977

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Marion Imes, began the work on external parasites of livestock in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1914. In 1928, Dr. Imes was placed in charge of the cattle grub control program with headquarters at Lamar, Colorado. The scientific staff of the Lamar laboratory was made up of Dr. Zeno Boyd, Supervisor, and Drs. Norman Cobbett, W. Clyde Mitchell, and Elmer Smith. The laboratory was discontinued in 1932, and Dr. Imes returned to Kansas City. Summaries of the work at Lamar appeared in the Annual Reports of the BAI Chief to the Secretary of Agriculture, but ^a full account of the experimental work was never written.

With the dissolution of the Lamar Laboratory, Dr. Boyd retired, Dr. Smith was transferred to Colorado Springs, Colorado, Dr. Norman Cobbett went to Las Vegas, New Mexico, and Dr. Mitchell went to San Angelo, Texas.

Dr. Imes retired in 1942 and Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, Chief of the Zoological Division, Washington, D. C. began looking for someone to replace him, who was qualified to carry on the external parasite control work in the Southwest, particularly in Arizona and New Mexico. Dr. S. O. Fladness, a veterinarian in the Bureau of Animal Industry, and a westerner, told Dr. Schwartz that he knew just the man for the job; Dr. Harry E. Kemper.

Dr. Kemper had obtained his Veterinary degree from Kansas City Veterinary College in 1908 and was a practicing veterinarian in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He had many year's experience in the field, knew parasites and poisonous plants, and had worked with Dr. Huffman, Head of the Poisonous Plant Investigations. He was a self-trained botanist and an excellent range livestock disease diagnostician.

In 1942, Dr. Kemper was put in charge of the new external parasite laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His primary responsibility was to conduct and oversee the scabies eradication program then being carried on in Arizona and New Mexico. The laboratory was first located in Room 208, of the Federal Building, next to the office of a practicing veterinarian, Dr. F. L. Schneider, who also had many year's experience with livestock diseases in the area as a member of the BAI's Field Inspection Division. He too was a remarkable range cattle disease diagnostician.

In 1943, Dr. Kemper hired Miss Louise Gerhardt, from Dr. Schneider's office, to be his secretary. She was an expert typist, but could type only with her right hand, as she had been crippled by poliomyelitis.

In 1944, the laboratory was given the added responsibility of developing a practical method for controlling cattle grubs which were causing 200 to 300 million dollars in losses to the cattle industry by perforating the hides and thereby reducing their value when manufactured into leather. This problem, which had to be attacked on a large scale, needed a laboratory especially designed for the work. Locations other than Albuquerque were considered, but were turned down because of climatic conditions. Colorado Springs was too cold, Las Vegas (NM) was too far north and too high, and San Angelo was too warm and not suitable for testing control measures that would have to be based on the life-cycle of the parasite (*Hypoderma lineata*).

When the decision was made, Dr. Kemper was able to lease from Vernon H. Magatagon for \$ 200 per month, a small parcel of land at Candalaria Street and South Broadway, and build a small laboratory and corrals for animals on the site. Dr. Kemper presented the package to Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Schwartz bought it.

In the same year (1944) Dr. Kemper hired Mr. Byard Boyce, a large but very gentle man, who became the laboratory's sole technician. He helped handle the livestock, did the laundry, and spread the tea towels and set the table for lunch.

About this time 600 acres of land were offered to the Department of Agriculture for a laboratory at Kerrville, Texas, by the Veteran's Administration. When Kerrville was withdrawn from consideration as a possible site for the cattle grub control laboratory in 1943, Dr. Mitchell resigned. When Dr. Smith was told to move his laboratory to Albuquerque in 1944, he also resigned.

In 1946, the sub-station at Las Vegas, NM was closed and Dr. Cobbett was transferred to Albuquerque. Dr. H. O. Peterson, who was returning from military service, and Dr. Irwin H. Roberts, who had joined the Zoological Division in 1939, were added to the External Parasite Research Laboratory staff.

In 1949, Dr. Roberts was transferred to Brookings, South Dakota for cattle grub control work which was being done in cooperation with South Dakota State College, at a cost of \$ 15,000 per year.

In 1950 livestock farmers at Ellensburg, Washington, set up their own cattle grub control program and Dr. Roberts was sent there to lay the foundation for the project when Dr. Cobbett refused the assignment.

Dr. Spindler was sent from Beltsville, MD in 1950 and 1951 to conduct the cattle grub eradication program in Ellensburg, Washington, and Dr. Peterson completed the work in 1952.

Dr. Kemper retired in 1954 and Willard W. Becklund and William Hindman joined the laboratory staff.

In 1955, Dr. H. O. Peterson became chief of the laboratory and Dr. Roberts was transferred to Springfield, Illinois, to assist the State of Illinois to eradicate cattle and sheep scabies, lice and ticks that were plaguing livestock in that area.

In 1956, Mr. Becklund, transferred to Tifton, Georgia to work on cattle parasites.

In 1957, Dr. Peterson brought into the laboratory, Dr. William P. Meleny, who was then on the staff of the Animal Health Division, and Carlos Jojola.

In 1958, Dr. Meleny transferred to the Zoological Division, Mr. Boyce suffered an injury to his knee while handling livestock and was transferred to the U.S.D.A.'s Regional Office in Albany, California, and Miss Harriett Culbenson replaced Mr. Boyce, as the laboratory technician.

In 1960, Sertero Apodaca, a Medical Technician in the army, was added to the staff.

In 1961, George Hanosh, who had an A.B. and Master's degrees in Zoology and Range Botany, from the University of New Mexico, joined the laboratory. In the same year, Dr. Howard W. Johnson, Chief of the Animal Disease and Parasite Research Division, and Dr. Aurel O. Foster, Chief of the Beltsville Parasitological Laboratory, visited the Albuquerque laboratory and decided that it was not good enough to do the work required, so steps were taken to find a suitable place to relocate it.

Land was available on an island in the Rio Grande River on the edge of a 200-year old Isleta Reservation which had been set aside for the Rio Grande Pueblo Indians, the southernmost of 13 such pueblos. However, Dr. Johnson did not approve of the location, and sat on the contract for a year. Finally, 20 acres on South Broadway were leased from Mr. Magatagon, on which to build the new laboratory, with the understanding that when the government was through with it, the land must be returned to its original condition. Water was available on the new site, but there were no fences. The laboratory building was copied from the one in Kerrville, TX. Drs. Peterson, Cobbett, and Roberts moved into the new laboratory in 1962.

In 1963, fences were moved from the old site to the new one and a nine-foot fence set in concrete was installed around the entire area. Dr. Peterson died of kidney failure, Dr. Cobbett died of a heart ailment, and Dr. Roberts became head of the laboratory. Louise Gerhardt retired and was replaced by Mary Howell.

In 1964, Miss Culbenson transferred to the Veteran's Administration.

In 1965, Dr. Donald Baker, who had retired from the Veterinary School faculty at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, came to the laboratory to work on demodecosis, a hide problem in cattle and horses. George Hanosh left in 1965 and was replaced by Kaszimirch Blachut, a Pole, who was an excellent technician, Bill Fisher also joined the laboratory to help Dr. Baker.

Everything went smoothly at the Albuquerque laboratory until the re-organization of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1971.

Dr. Edward Kendric, of UCLA, was appointed Director of the Southwest Region of the Agricultural Research Service. He was chiefly interested in plant and crop research with emphasis on cotton and His headquarters were in Tuscon, Arizona.

The Animal Parasite Laboratory at the University of New Mexico in Las Cruces was the first laboratory to be closed. Dr. Rex Allen resigned in January 1972. The laboratory was left in charge of Dr. Grant I. Wilson, until June 1972. Rex stayed on as a collaborator for one or two years with the University of New Mexico. Mr. K. Samson was terminated, and got a job as a GS in a Cotton Laboratory in Phoenix. He is still there as far as I know.. (IHR) Dr. Grant Wilson became an unemployed Zoologist in June of 1972. and and taught in Montana during the summer of 1972.

Dr. Kendric paid Dr. Roberts a visit in 1973 telling him he had some good news and some bad news. He could employ Dr. Wilson, who had "bumping" rights, so far as Mr. Blachut was concerned, but he would have to fire Mr. Blachut. Accordingly, Dr. Roberts had to give Mr. Blachut 2-week's notice of his impending dismissal. Dr. Wilson moved to Albuquerque in 1973.

Dr. Roberts retired in 1976,

Dr. Meleny disposed of the laboratory, now valued at \$ 400,000 during the first part of 1977, and transferred to the Entomology Laboratory at Kerrville, Texas in July. In addition all plumbing had to be removed and fences torn down. The animals: mice, rabbits, rats, horses, cattle, and sheep were transferred to the Kerrville, TX. laboratory, sold or destroyed. Dr. Wilson had to oversee the tearing down and disposal of the 9-foot border fence, including the concrete footings in which it was set, the removal of more than 1,000 yards of manure from the pastures and feed lots, and the digging up and disposal of all water and sewer lines in the 20-acre area. Dr. Wilson completed this assignment by August 1977, then moved to Provo, Utah, where he eventually obtained a teaching position in the University.