

Axolotl Colony Update

The Axolotl Colony began a new spawning season in October. Because of our troubles over the summer (see below), we expect over the course of this season to be able to supply a somewhat reduced volume of embryos, compared to last season when we shipped over 85,000 embryos. Fortunately, our disease problems have abated, and our axolotls are now spawning willingly, so as we build back up the number of breeding animals, our shipping should return to more normal levels.

The Colony experienced a major epidemic among the axolotls beginning during June, and we spent the summer hard at work dealing with the problem. In spite of our best efforts, the organism responsible was never certainly identified, but we are confident now that the outbreak has been brought under control. We wish to express our gratitude for the willing help and advice we received from the many people we consulted while struggling with the disease. Special thanks go to **Rusty Schmidt**, Director of Laboratory Animal Resources at IU, **Dr. Christina Swanson**, IU Consulting Veterinarian, **Dr. Tim Muench**, Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Purdue University, **Dr. Roger Brannian**, Department of Pathology, University of Wisconsin and National Wildlife Health Center, **Dr. David Graham**, Veterinary Pathologist at Texas A & M University, and **Dr. Graham Crawshaw**, Metropolitan Toronto Zoo. Dr. Brannian, in particular, put many hours of effort into our problem, for which we are deeply grateful.

One project in the works, although tempo-

rarily derailed by the colony epidemic, is an Axolotl Colony World Wide Web page. I hope to have it online sometime during the coming year. Any Axolotl Newsletter readers who would like to suggest material for the website, or who might have information (text or graphics) that you would like to contribute, please contact me by email. My address is duhon@indiana.edu.

The special issue of the International Journal of Developmental Biology on urodeles has reached the publisher in Spain. The issue will have over 200 pages, covering all aspects of development as studied in urodeles. The preliminary contents can be found in the archives of the URODELES mailing list/newsgroup (gopher://net.bio.net). We expect the issue to appear sometime in the next several months. If you, or your library, do not subscribe, you may wish to purchase a single copy. Depending upon how many single copies are ordered, the price per copy will be \$40 to \$45. If you think you may be interested in ordering a copy, contact me by phone (812-855-8260), fax (812-855-6705), or email (duhon@indiana.edu).

As most of you know, we applied for renewal of the Axolotl Colony Grant from the National Science Foundation last Spring, but we will not know the results until January or February. The NSF gave us a four-month funded extension in order to synchronize the start dates of grants of our type, so that it would be possible to convene a panel to make the funding decisions.

Susan Duhon
IU Axolotl Colony
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