

# LIVESTOCK LABORATORY



Fig. 1. The Livestock Lab just after opening, 1992. [photo courtesy of Dr. Daniel Shaeffer]

*The livestock laboratory, previously known as the large animal holding facility was built after decades of planning in 1991. The laboratory animal contains holding pens for goats, sheep, and swine, cattle holding, weighing rooms, feed laboratories, surgery rooms, and offices.*

The struggle to build a research quality animal barn began as early as the 1950s. The departments of meat and animal science were housing animals in a group of very old and unsuitable buildings (see Fig. 2).

In the 1950s the department of Animal Husbandry asked for separate buildings for cattle swine and sheep in the area later used for the school of veterinary medicine. This early attempt drew no support. In 1966 a new plan arose from the department of meat and animal science. It was hoped that a surplus of funds for the animal science building, which was funded by a special oleomargarine tax, would provide the money for the new research facility. The surplus did not come near the estimated \$2.1 million needed. In 1970 the project was listed eighth on the campus priority building list. Funding was projected to come from the sale of real estate used by the college of Agriculture. This attempt failed when a combination of declining demand and inflation destroyed this avenue for funding. The failure of a plan to remodel the old horse and dairy barns marks the beginning of the successful plan.

In 1979 a faculty committee justified the need for a "large animal holding facility", with equipment to flush manure to the Madison city sewer system. This report led to the appointment of a plan-



Fig. 2. The old beef barn, just before demolition in August 1991. The beef barn was built in 1924. For decades the departments of meat and animal science were limited to a few old buildings. Besides the old horse and dairy barns (not shown) there were at 1810 Linden Drive two c. 1912 swine barns (already demolished when this picture was taken), and the beef barn. [photo courtesy of Dr. Daniel Schaeffer]

ning committee (chaired by Dr. Daniel Schaefer) for the new building in 1983. This committee submitted the building plan to the department of planning and construction (P & C) whose estimate of \$2.1 million was based on animal facilities at the Arlington Farms, and turned out to be far too low. The building committee had selected as a location the site of the older barns for swine and cattle, just north of the horse barn on Linden Drive. Trouble reappeared when in 1986 the project architects MZM of Madison informed the meat and Animal Science department that the building would cost about \$3.1 million. The building committee went back to the drawing board, and slashed as much cost from the plans as possible. Among the features which became casualties at this stage were upper level apartments for student managers, and a relatively "normal" looking pitched roof. As a result of these changes, in September 1987 the regents approved a budget increase to \$2.5 million.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1980s, the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) began to object to the runoff of manure into Lake Mendota. As a result the new barn would have to be built with modern and effective manure handling equipment. It also meant that the new building would have to be built soon to avoid legal action by the DNR.<sup>2</sup>

The regent's approved the preliminary plans for the building in November 1987. When estimates came in well over budget, the decision was made by the departments involved to erect the building without equipment, and obtain separate funding later for equipment.<sup>3</sup>

Construction contracts were let June 20, 1991, with the general construction contract going to Gilbert Construction Company of Verona, for \$1.3 million. Total contracted costs were \$3.44 million. On August 9, 1991 the governor signed the contracts for construction of the livestock lab. Ground-breaking on the livestock lab took place on August 26, 1991.<sup>4</sup>

Construction proceeded smoothly and quickly as the contractors worked through the winter. Basement walls were completed in early October. All bearing walls were completed by January 9, 1992. Exterior siding was completed by May 1 1992. The silo was erected in June 1992. Landscaping and punch-list items consumed the remainder of 1992, and the building was turned over to the University by the state on February 17, 1993. On April 5, 1993 the first animals, a small flock of ewes, spent the night in the new building.<sup>5</sup>

A formal dedication was held for the new livestock lab on April 30, 1993. Dr. Schaefer gave the address, reflecting the turbulent gestation of the facility, when he said " There were days when I didn't believe this event would occur. There were other days when I felt I wouldn't attend if it did

occur." The appearance of the building caused much comment. The Capital Times called it strange and ugly.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Schaefer himself remarked upon its undeniable similarity to a Pizza Hut. Most of this peculiarity of appearance is caused by the budget-driven replacement of the originally planned gable roof with a flat roof which required a penthouse to house mechanical systems.<sup>6</sup>

The finished livestock lab is 260 by 112 feet of concrete block, sheathed with terra-cotta colored face brick and red metal siding. It is a basement and one floor above grade. The lower level contains animal holding pens for goats, sheep, and an entire swine production unit (from gestation to finishing). The upper level contains cattle holding, weighing rooms, feed laboratories, surgery rooms, and offices.

After four decades, the University had a laboratory quality animal facility. As of the spring of 1995 the livestock lab is still not completely furnished.

1) A Brief History of the Livestock Laboratory, undated, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer. Large Animal Holding Facility, August 1984, series 4/31/9-2 box 1;

2) A Brief History of the Livestock Laboratory, undated, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer. *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 12, 1987; *Regent's Minutes*, February 8, 1985.

3) Regent's Minutes, November 11, 1987, July 12, 1991.

4) Brandherm to Brown, June 20, 1991, State Department of Administration, office of Patricia Hilestadt. Progress Meetings #1-3, August 8, August 15, August 22, 1991, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer.

5) Progress Meetings #1-30, August 8, 1991 - June 18, 1992, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer; *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 18, 1993; News and Features Release, October 8, 1992, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer.

6) Livestock Lab Grand Opening program, and remarks, April 30, 1993, papers of Dr. Daniel Schaefer; *Capital Times*, May 29, 1992;