Collaboration in *Toxoplasma gondii* diagnosis between SGUSVM and USDA

At the invitation of Dr. Jitender P. Dubey, a renowned researcher on toxoplasmosis in humans and animals, I was sent by St. George’s University to the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory in Maryland for training from 8\textsuperscript{th} to 12\textsuperscript{th} March, 2010 in *Toxoplasma gondii* diagnostics. Since our research laboratory at the School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) is now fully operational, it has become imperative to develop capacity in diagnostics including serology and PCR with respect to Toxoplasmosis. The benefit of this is that there will now be no need to ship research samples to the United States Department of Agriculture for the diagnosis of this important zoonotic protozoan parasite. We share the vision that the SVM Research and Diagnostic Laboratories will evolve into a regional diagnostic centre for *T. gondii*.

Another important aspect of the trip was a unique experience of meeting other visiting researchers from different countries including Brazil, Egypt and India. This provided great educational value, cultural exchange and networking opportunities.

The importance of partnerships in research cannot be over-emphasized. To this effect, the School of Veterinary Medicine at St. George’s University has a long and sound collaborative relationship with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory on toxoplasmosis in various animal species. So far, important milestones have been made including five publications in a peer-reviewed journal of Parasitology and presentation of papers at both local and international scientific platforms.

I would like to wholeheartedly thank Dr. Raymond Sis and Dr. Ravindra Sharma for the encouragement rendered and St. George’s University for financial support. I feel indebted to Dr. Jitender P. Dubey and Dr. Oliver Kwok for taking some time from their busy schedule in order to teach and guide me.

Submitted by: Dr. Alfred Chikweto
Description of images

1. Depicting visiting researchers. From left to right: Leandra Ferreira (Brazil), Alfred Chikweto (Grenada), Rajendran Chellaiah (India), Juliana Martins (Brazil).

2. Dr. J.P. Dubey and Dr. Alfred Chikweto in the laboratory.

3. Dr. Oliver Kwok and Dr. Alfred Chikweto in the laboratory.