

Fundamentals of Aviculture® Update

Greetings,

I am pleased to be able to provide an update on the American Federation of Aviculture's (AFA's) educational course entitled Fundamentals of Aviculture®. The course was created to fulfill our organization's educational mission. Initial development of the course was enabled by a \$10,000 grant from "The Pet Care Trust" in 2001, supplemented with matching funds from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A&M University, Schubot Exotic Bird Health Center. These initial contributions were augmented by another \$3,000 contribution from Genny Wall in 2004. While these donations were substantial, we had envisioned that the program would require outside funding on the order of \$35,000 in addition to another \$41,680 represented by internal, in-kind contributions from AFA members of the project team. Despite the obvious funding shortfall, the course has now been developed.

In the beginning, we planned to teach the course in a classroom setting. This approach required development of visual aids, a course workbook and, of course, an instructor. The course was initially beta-tested using a draft workbook and presentation materials with the Triangle Bird Club in Beaumont, Texas. It was further tested at offerings in Houston, Texas; Tampa, Florida; and at the 2004 convention in San Francisco, California. These offerings elicited considerable feedback about course content and provided us with a better appreciation of the cost that was going to be required to offer the course. These offerings also led to a number of our members receiving certification that they had mastered the basic fundamentals of aviculture.

In 2005, it became apparent that the cost of teaching the course in a classroom setting was going to be substantial due to instructor fees, travel and per diem, workbook costs, administrative costs, etc. This led to development of a new course that is computer-based and for which the costs will be minimal to our members. This approach has been implemented, and a brand new course has been written. We feel that this new course is a significant improvement over the previous course.

I am pleased to announce that the new Fundamentals in Aviculture® course will be described at our August 2006 Convention at the House of Delegates meeting. For you who have taken the original course and received our certification, those certifications will remain valid. I trust, however, that you will want to look at the new materials and provide comments to us.

I look forward to seeing you all in Dallas in August.

Sincerely



Benny J. Gallaway, Ph.D.
President, American Federation of Aviculture, Inc.

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