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## CSU scientists get new home

The Diagnostic Medicine Center facility will be a vital cog in identifying and halting diseases spread by animals, officials say.

**By Monte Whaley**  
The Denver Post

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Staffers each morning sort the myriad samples mailed or brought in to CSU's Diagnostic Medicine Center, which moved into a new building this month. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

FORT COLLINS — Gone are the days when results from blood tests, animal autopsies and biopsies of horses and cows were shuttled between trailers and cramped hallways on the Colorado State University campus.

CSU now has a \$42 million centralized facility that combines resources and personnel to track outbreaks of animal diseases — such as mad cow and rabies — that can affect public health.

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"We had people working in storerooms, people in hallways and labs scattered everywhere," said Barb Powers, director of the Diagnostic Medicine Center, which moved into its new building earlier this month. "Now, we can do all of that under one roof. I think we can be a centerpiece for the campus."

The center also

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- View a gallery of photos of the new CSU facility .

will be a vital cog in a network of state and federal agencies aimed at identifying and halting diseases spread by animals, say officials.

It is one of seven labs in the nation selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to test for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. The DMC also is a core laboratory of the National Animal Laboratory Network.

In addition, the facility is associated with the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is not surprising given how quickly animal diseases can affect the human population, said Powers, who has headed the center for 13 years.

"Over 75 percent of the newly emerged diseases come from animals," she said.

Experts at the center recently diagnosed rabies

in a sick horse in El Paso County. "That is extremely rare for horses and something that raised some eyebrows here," Powers said.

The horse, the first case of equine rabies diagnosed in Colorado in 25 years, was euthanized on Sept. 11. El Paso County public-health officials followed up with a warning, reminding people to be careful around bats and skunks because the disease has been found in those populations this year.

The center also was recently asked to test



A fake rooster dons a mask. "Over 75 percent of the newly emerged diseases come from animals," says director Barb Powers. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

more than 2,000 cattle headed for Iran to ensure that they were disease free, she said.

This time of year, the center begins seeing more testing for chronic-wasting disease in deer and elk in an effort to keep the ailment from spreading.

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"The new facility is an important addition to the university's role in keeping animals around the state and nation healthy," said Lance Perryman, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. "We're grateful to the state for its support in helping us do this more effectively."

Some 16 faculty, 55 staff members and up to 15 students work at the center, sometimes at all hours, helping to track down diseases both locally and across the nation.

Located behind the CSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the 88,000-square foot DMC houses the college's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, the university's Cooperative Extension veterinarian, the Clinical Pathology Laboratory and the Animal Population Health Institute.

The diagnostic laboratory processes about 500,000 tests, including necropsies, each year. The new building includes 2,000 square feet of biosecurity level 3 laboratory space.

The facility — funded entirely by the state — was being planned as early as 2001. Budget constraints then, however, halted its development until December 2007.

Getting it built was aided through lobbying of the state's veterinarians and the livestock industry, said Powers. Both groups saw the enormous benefits of a centralized laboratory overseeing developments in animal ailments.

"I think people saw a real value in what we do

here," she said.

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