



## PATHWAY TO PATHOLOGY

by Alex Avelino

**Y**ou've just spent years, long hours in the library and money on your education to begin your career, when you realize it's not exactly what you wanted. Now what?

This was the story for Dr. Lisa Farina, a veterinary anatomic pathologist at the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Farina went to vet school thinking she wanted to be a zoological medicine veterinarian, only to find out she "didn't enjoy things with hooves very much." After a one-year internship and nine months of private practice, she knew her career path needed to change.

So what is anatomic pathology? Pathology is the study of disease. Anatomic pathologists look at biopsies removed from live animals or perform necropsies (the examination of the organs of a dead animal). Anything they can't determine with their

eyes can be cut into smaller slices of tissue and placed on a microscope slide.

As with all science, research is an important part of pathology. When scientists like Dr. Farina find diseases in new species or discover something that can help human health, it is important that they share their findings with the medical community to prevent zoonotic disease, the spread of disease from animals to humans. "We are important in diagnosing diseases that might be zoonotic, like rabies and tuberculosis." A veterinary pathologist was the first to realize West Nile virus was in the U.S.

When searching for a career, one needs to decide the type of working environment where they will thrive. For the students who are interested in working with other scientists or behind a microscope, veterinary pathology may be the right path for them.

**"SOMETIMES  
THERE  
AREN'T  
GOOD TESTS  
FOR THINGS,  
UNLESS  
THEY'RE  
DEAD."**

