

1 *Remarks by Stanley Curtis*

2 *On the occasion of establishment of the*
3 *Corbin Award in Companion Animal Biology*
4 *American Society of Animal Science*
5 *Meeting in Indianapolis, 27 July 2001*

6
7 *The Award*

8 It is fitting that establishment of the Society's newest award—this one for
9 achievements in companion animal biology—coincides with the appointment of new
10 program committees at sectional and national levels for presentations on matters in
11 companion animal biology.

12 It is a professional privilege and a personal pleasure to represent The Iams
13 Company and
14 Dr. Diane Hirakawa, Iams senior vice-president for research and development,
15 tonight in introducing this award as well as the extraordinary animal scientist
16 whom it honors by its perpetual title—the *Corbin Award in Companion Animal*
17 *Biology*.

18 Dr. Hirakawa asked that her sentiments on this occasion be expressed:

19 “Dr. Corbin has dedicated his life to improving the nutritional offerings for
20 dogs and cats around the world. His entrepreneurial spirit, his ability to innovate
21 and his joy of teaching have touched thousands of people throughout industry and
22 academia. We are all a little richer, and our pets a little healthier, due to the hard

23 work and dedication of Dr. Jim Corbin. The Iams Company is proud to sponsor this
24 award in his name.”

25 The Iams Company intends by sponsoring the Corbin Award in Companion
26 Animal Biology to demonstrate

27 = its continuing support for scientific research specifically related to pet
28 species being conducted by animal scientists, and

29 = its strong encouragement of teaching the scientific principles of companion
30 animal biology at all academic levels as well as the training of graduate students in
31 animal science in the fundamental approaches to applied and basic research on any
32 and all aspects of companion animal biology.

33 *The Animal Scientist*

34 *Honored by the Award Title*

35 The American Society of Animal Science’s Corbin Award in Companion
36 Animal Biology sponsored by The Iams Company is named after Dr. James Edward
37 Corbin, known all over the pet-food world simply as “Jim Corbin.”

38 This, too, is fitting. Because if it could be said that any one individual is the
39 father of the modern pet-food industry, then that one person would be Jim Corbin.
40 And I should like to tell you why.

41 Jim Corbin was born 80 years ago this month on a small general farm
42 outside Providence, Kentucky, where he grew up doing all the things farmboys did
43 in those days. After high school, in response to encouragement from his mentors
44 and family members, Jim immediately enrolled in animal husbandry at the

45 University of Kentucky. There he worked in the beef cattle research barn and lived
46 in the student room at the barn for four years in order to make ends meet.

47 Upon graduation with a bachelor's degree, Jim went on active duty as a
48 Lieutenant (junior grade) with the United States Navy, serving mostly in the Pacific
49 Theater during World War II.

50 He returned to Lexington at the end of the war and earned a master's degree
51 at UK in 1947 before matriculating at the University of Illinois, which awarded him
52 a doctorate in animal science and nutrition in 1950.

53 Jim's first position after graduate school was as director of animal nutrition
54 and feeds with National Oats Company near Saint Louis. He joined Ralston Purina
55 Company at Checkerboard Square as manager of special chows research in 1954
56 and became manager of dog research in 1959. It was during this decade of the
57 1950s that Jim Corbin, working with his dear friend and scientific colleague, Dr. Joe
58 Vandepopulaire, using an experimental extruder borrowed from the human foods
59 research laboratory down the hall manufactured the first extruded animal food ever
60 produced anywhere on earth. This truly was the start of the commercial pet-food
61 industry as we now know it.

62 An interesting side note is that a major goal of this approach at the time was
63 to be able to produce products of which competing firms' feed microscopists could
64 not ascertain the ingredient formula.

65 The new product was a "big hit" with the lap dog of the wife of the Purina
66 board chairman, who promptly increased Jim's research budget—and the rest is
67 history.

68 Today, 850 boxcarsful of dry dog and cat food is manufactured in the United
69 States every working day. And over 95% of the nutritional offerings to America's
70 cats and dogs is in the dry form.

71 Jim became the first director of the Purina Pet Care Center in 1967. And for
72 several years, his photographic portrait was printed on every bag of Purina Dog
73 Chow sold. And he got personally involved in answering customer queries from a
74 clientele ranging from Bob Milligan in Buzzards Glory, Ohio, to Zsa Zsa Gabor in
75 Hollywood, California.

76 Jim Corbin found time in these years to provide a tremendous amount of
77 service in such ways as

78 = president of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science;

79 = member and chair of numerous NRC subcommittees on dog, cat, horse,
80 and laboratory-animal nutrition and husbandry; and

81 = member of advisory boards to zoos and humane organizations.

82 He actively participated in more than a dozen scientific, professional, and industry
83 organizations, including the American Society of Animal Science, which he joined
84 55 years ago—in 1946, while earning a master's degree at Kentucky. He also was a
85 prolific author of chapters and articles published in scientific and trade books and
86 journals.

87 In 1973—28 years ago—at the invitation of Dr. Gene Becker, Jim Corbin
88 returned to his alma mater, the University of Illinois, where he established a world-
89 class teaching and research program in companion animal biology. The popularity
90 of the program with students at all levels and with colleagues such as David Baker,

91 **George Fahey, Neal Merchen, John Milner, Joseph Simon, Gail Czarnecki-Mauldin,**
92 **and Linda Case has boggled the mind ever since.**

93 **Jim Corbin made his work at the university, in my observation, a 14-hour-a-**
94 **day, 6-day-a-week commitment, which incidentally he continues to this day. But in**
95 **the meantime, Jim developed a consulting practice in pet-food nutrition,**
96 **manufacturing, and marketing that has taken him to virtually every developed and**
97 **developing country in the world. He truly would be a travel agent's delight as a**
98 **client were it not for the fact that—even before the internet—Jim has always**
99 **booked his flights for himself.**

100 **Now, I ask you who are gathered here tonight: Can you imagine a more**
101 **fitting person to honor by the title of the Society's newest award?**

102 **Let's put our hands together as we honor him and welcome him!**

103 **(Read citation on plaque:)**

104 **Presented to**

105 **Dr. James E. Corbin**

106 **In recognition of the bold and creative leadership you have provided the**
107 **pet food industry to advance nutritional science for companion animals, the**

108 **Corbin Award in Companion Animal Biology**

109 **is hereby established and dedicated in your honor.**

110 **Your pioneering achievements have influenced the health and**

111 **well-being of dogs and cats around the world**

112 **and will continue to shape future nutritional developments.**

113 ***You have been a friend, a mentor, and an encourager to all those you encounter.***

114

Your outstanding leadership will not be forgotten.

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The Iams Company

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July 27, 2001

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