



Office of the President

November 23, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I am excited that Thanksgiving is finally here. While it typically marks the beginning of the holiday season, last year's Thanksgiving was different for many of us—I know it was for me. Since I do not have family who lives close to me, I usually host my close friends for this holiday. As some of you know, I do not prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal, and while our gathering is not necessarily traditional, we have a deep appreciation for the meaning of the holiday.

All of us are immigrants, and a few of us have known each other for many years; in fact, one of my friends I have known since middle school grew up down the street from me in Bogota, Colombia. By coincidence, this group of friends ended up here in the Los Angeles area. Last year, due to COVID, we did not celebrate together; however, this year we are getting together for Thanksgiving to celebrate the holiday and another year of friendship.

A couple of months ago one of our friends said that she wanted to host Thanksgiving this year. I usually host, but I did not argue and was happy to meet at her home this year. Then she said that we need to make it extra special since we did not get together last year. She added that we should have a theme. Naturally, we responded in the way that friends sometimes do—we made fun of her idea. One of us reminded her, “It is always the same theme: Thanksgiving.”

Other silly comments and ideas continued for a while, but she continued to bring up the need for a theme, until I said, “Sure, let’s do a pirate theme. Let’s all show up dressed as pirates for Thanksgiving.”

We laughed, cracked a few more jokes, and the conversation ended.

A couple of weeks ago, she sent an invitation for our Thanksgiving dinner, and what do you know? It was a pirate invitation for a pirate-themed Thanksgiving. I guess she was serious about having a theme after all. While we thought she was joking, it seems like the joke is on us, and now she is very serious about her pirate-themed Thanksgiving dinner.

I am not sure what pirates have to do with Thanksgiving, but again, we have always celebrated this holiday in non-traditional ways, perhaps this will be a new tradition for us.

For all of us, Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful for the opportunities given to us and to celebrate the bonds of families and friends. I wish you a very happy Thanksgiving holiday with your friends and loved ones—however you choose to celebrate it.

Jose

Jose L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President/Superintendent