



The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Research News & Analysis May 10, 2004

In this Issue...

- 1. ILAR Addressing Transportation of Laboratory Animals**
- 2. Canada Releases 2001 Statistics on Research Animal Use**
- 3. VA Becomes 10th State to Give Students a Choice in Dissection**
- 4. CAAT Offers Web-based "Enhancing Humane Science" Course**
- 5. Coalition Works to End Use of Animal Serum in Cell Culture Media**

1. ILAR Addressing Transportation of Laboratory Animals

The U.S.-based Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) recently established a Committee on Guidelines for the Humane Transportation of Laboratory Animals. The Committee is charged with addressing current problems with the transportation of lab animals, including: animal welfare concerns, availability of quality transportation services, overlaps or gaps in regulatory oversight, permitting issues, tissue/specimen transportation, regulatory burden reduction, and potential biosecurity concerns. All species of lab animals will be considered. The Committee's work is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the National Centers for Infectious Diseases.

Some of the recurring animal welfare problems in transportation include animals dying or suffering from distress due to temperature extremes in non-climate controlled vehicles; lack of quality care and handling at every stage of shipment, including workers not trained to properly feed/water animals during transit; lack of regulatory jurisdiction on the transportation of rats, mice and birds; and the possibility and ease of spreading infectious diseases. At the Committee's first meeting, held in Washington, DC on April 21-22, 2004, representatives from government agencies, education institutions, and the private sector made recommendations on the direction of the new guidelines. The Committee will issue a report that includes recommendations intended for government agencies and individual investigators/animal facility managers by late 2005.

Sources: *ILAR*

(<http://www4.nas.edu/webcr.nsf/5c50571a75df494485256a95007a091e/c8a54550c5fde37e85256e6d00604022>); *HSUS*

2. Canada Releases 2001 Statistics on Research Animal Use

The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) recently released statistics collected from their annual survey on research animal use for 2001. The total number of animals used in research, teaching and testing was 2,136,329, up 8.5% from the previous year. Mice, rats, fish and domestic birds (chickens) constituted 87% of the overall total. Noteworthy changes in species patterns from the previous year include a 27% increase in the use of cats (to 4,093) and a 25% decrease in the use of non-human primates (to 1,883). Animals were used in the following categories: studies of a fundamental nature (59%), clinical studies (19%), regulatory testing (12%), medicinal product testing (6%) and educational purposes (3%). 25% of all animals experienced moderate to severe distress or discomfort and an additional 5% (96,680) experienced severe pain near, at or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanesthetized conscious animals.

Source: *RESOURCE*, Vol. 27, No.1, Winter 2003-2004 (see <http://www.ccac.ca/english/facts/pdfs/aus2001-all.pdf>)

3. VA Becomes 10th State to Give Students a Choice in Dissection

In April, 2004, Virginia enacted a law that gives public school students through high school the option of using dissection alternatives in their biology classes. The new law mandates that students and parents be informed of the option to use alternatives. The law also mandates that the state school board issue guidelines on the use of alternatives such as computer simulations, anatomical models, videos, slides and charts. H.B. 1018 was sponsored by Delegate James H. Dillard, II (R, 41) and supported by The Humane Society of the United States. Virginia joins nine other states that have similar laws. For information comparing dissection and alternate procedures on a variety of issues, including student performance and overall lab costs, visit <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11368>.

“Student choice policies provide all students, especially those opposed to the killing of animals for classroom use, an equal opportunity to excel in biology classes,” said Martin Stephens, HSUS Vice President of Animal Research Issues. “Achievement in school should not be based on a students’ willingness to cut up a dead animal.”

Sources: *HSUS press release, April 16, 2004* (<http://www.hsus.org/ace/20925>)

4. CAAT Offers Web-based “Enhancing Humane Science” Course

The Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT) recently announced a free online course on "Enhancing Humane Science/Improving Animal Research". The course addresses issues such as experimental design (including statistics and sample size determination), humane endpoints, environmental enrichment, post-surgical care, pain management, and the impact of stress on the quality of data. The self-paced course consists of 12 audio lectures with accompanying slides, resource lists, and study questions. It was developed by Alan Goldberg (CAAT director) and James Owiny (the training and compliance administrator of the Johns Hopkins University animal care and use committee), along with Christian Newcomer (associate provost for animal research and resources at Hopkins). To register, please see the CAAT web site at <http://caat.jhsph.edu>.

Source: *The Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing press release*

5. Coalition Works to End Use of Animal Serum in Cell Culture Media

A coalition of British organizations is targeting the practice of using animal serum in media for cell cultures. Such serum is collected from fetal calves removed from their mothers after the latter are found to be pregnant during slaughter. According to Focus on Alternatives (FoA), the process involves taking the fetal calf's blood through a cardiac puncture without anesthesia. This becomes problematic in light of the growing evidence that mammalian fetuses beyond a certain stage of development have normal brain activity, suggesting that they can feel pain. Consequently, it can be argued that the calves used in blood collection suffer until they are actually dead. FoA estimates that one to two million calf fetuses undergo this procedure every year.

FOA, a coalition of animal welfare organizations working towards the replacement of animal experiments, has compiled a list of companies that provide serum-free media for cell cultures. FoA created the list to help researchers locate sources of serum-free media in an attempt to eliminate the use of fetal calf serum. The directory has close to 200 entries of companies that supply serum-free media, ranging from cell-specific to general purpose.

Source: Focus on Alternatives (<http://www.focusonalternatives.org.uk/Serum-FreeTable.doc>)

Animal Research News & Analysis is an electronic newsletter that provides news stories and interpretive analyses concerning the use of animals in research, testing, and education. The newsletter is produced by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and is distributed periodically. Any questions, comments or email address changes should be directed to ari@hsus.org. To unsubscribe, please send an e-mail request to ari@hsus.org with the words, "unsubscribe – Animal Research News" in the subject line; please specify your first and last name. The HSUS's collection of web-based animal research-related news stories can be viewed at: www.hsus.org/ace/712.

*Animal Research Issues, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
(301) 258-3041, <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11348>*

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

~~Please feel free to forward this newsletter to a colleague or friend whom you think may be interested in receiving it.~~