

In This Issue

- Research Highlight - STAR Laboratories
- Annual Review of ILACUC Protocols
- AAALAC Accreditation
- ULAR Update

ILACUC Info:

<http://www.orrp.ohio-state.edu/animalsubjects/>

ULAR Info:

<http://ular.osu.edu/>

Newsletter editors:

Richard D. Tallman, Ph.D.
Chair, ILACUC

Deborah A. Frolicher, B.S.
ILACUC Administrator

Research Highlight - STAR Laboratories

The Spinal Trauma And Repair Laboratories here at The Ohio State University has been named by the National Institutes of Health as one of three Facilities of Research Excellence in Spinal Cord Injury in the country. In 2003, this laboratory received a five year contract from the National Institutes of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to train other researchers on the most efficacious models for studying spinal cord injury. This training program, offered once each year, was developed in order to promote consistency of procedures and animal care across laboratories and to develop these research sites as a center for collaborative studies for spinal cord injury (SCI). Another goal is to review and replicate novel treatments for SCI, and to compare the efficacy of different treatments in a standardized environment with a minimum of variability in surgery, animal care, outcome evaluation and cellular analyses.

July of 2005 is the third offering of this program. It is being held amongst protests from local animal rights groups (POET) and the PCRM (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine), a group consisting in large part of laypersons promoting compassionate and effective medical practice, research, and health promotion including alternatives to animal research. PCRM recently filed a complaint with the NIH regarding the STAR training program, asking the regulatory oversight body, OLAW (Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare) to investigate the approval of this work by the university's ILACUC. The final letter from OLAW stated "OLAW finds the ILACUC review and the described performance of the spinal cord injury study to be consistent with the provisions of the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals". Upon receipt of this letter, Tom Rosol, senior associate vice president for research at Ohio State, said, "We consider this an absolute vindication of our efforts to responsibly care for the animals we use in research. The scientists who designed and conducted this program have been unfairly accused and maligned in recent years, and this shows that their work meets the exacting standards required by federal regulators, as well as our own internal safeguards. They deserve our admiration and thanks for enduring these attacks and continuing their efforts at improving our understanding of spinal cord injuries".

Annual Review of ILACUC Protocols

By now, most university researchers have continued renewal of their approved ILACUC protocols utilizing the recently revised (July 2004) annual review process. The biggest change in this form from its predecessor is the additional information requested regarding key personnel, housing and procedure sites. This information is necessary to

aid the ILACUC in accomplishing oversight activities as required for accreditation (see AAALAC accreditation section).

The ILACUC is required by federal regulation to inspect all areas where procedures are performed on live animals. As some of you may know and others may imagine, this is a daunting task made worse by inaccurate information. In the past, many times, ILACUC members would appear at a specific location only to be informed that work was no longer being conducted. This updated information in conjunction with billing and housing records allows the ILACUC to appropriately focus each semiannual inspection.

Before any individual may actively participate in research and/or teaching utilizing animals he/she must attend the USDA mandated Animal Usage Orientation class (offered monthly) and complete a medical surveillance health questionnaire. By collecting key personnel names, the Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP) in conjunction with the Office of Environmental Health & Safety and the Office of Employee Health are able to ensure that all affected university personnel have completed the necessary training and that a research risk assessment has been performed. These checks thereby assure continued university compliance with federal regulations.

AAALAC Accreditation

AAALAC International is a private, nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science through voluntary accreditation and assessment programs. AAALAC stands for the "Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care." AAALAC endorses the use of animals to advance medicine and science when there are no non-animal alternatives and when the research is done in an ethical and humane way.

More than 680 companies, universities, hospitals, government agencies and other research institutions in 26 countries have earned AAALAC accreditation, demonstrating their commitment to responsible animal care and use, meeting the minimum standards required by law, and working towards achieving excellence in animal care and use. The history of AAALAC accreditation at Ohio State began in 1967 when the College of Medicine received accreditation. Since that time, other colleges received accreditation. Eventually (circa 1999) all biomedical laboratory animal research facilities were accredited and that standard has been continued.

Accreditation site visits are conducted every three years. Ohio States' next scheduled site visit will be this fall (October 2005). As this time approaches, the Office of Research, Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP), ILACUC, and University Laboratory Animal Resources (ULAR) will be working to be certain our entire program meets all standards and regulations. These may include physical plant, enrollment of all research personnel in an occupational health risk assessment program, protocol compliance, etc.

Our occupational health and safety program was identified as needing improvement at the last accreditation visit. Federal regulations mandate that all people involved in animal research be part of such a program. The university's strategy for accomplishing this is to obtain a completed

health registry form from all researchers and research staff. The collected information is then updated annually. Most of our new research staff have completed the health registry process as part of the Animal Usage Orientation Course. For those investigators and their staff who have not completed a health registry form within the last year, expect to receive future communication detailing required enrollment procedures. It is very important that these forms be completed and submitted for processing. Failure to submit these forms may result in suspension of research activities.

ULAR Update

ULAR wishes to thank our researchers and staffs for being patient through our renovation and construction (R&C) projects. At various times this year, ULAR had nine (R&C) projects ongoing at almost the same time including Wiseman Hall Surgery, Graves Hall, Graves Hall Mobile Mouse Units, LAC-1 HVAC, West Campus Biocontainment Facility, Keck Facility (Pressey Hall) HVAC, the new Psychology Building, 2001 Polaris and the new Biomedical Research Tower. Your patience and understanding was and is appreciated.

The ULAR would like to welcome Dr. Carrie Kraly to our veterinary staff. Many of you will know Carrie as she worked for ULAR on and off for about 6 years. Carrie was an ACLAM "Dr. Cass Lab Animal Medicine Fellow" and in addition to her D.V.M. holds a M.S. in Laboratory Animal Science. Please welcome her. She will be primarily on the main health sciences campus.

And finally, the ULAR staff has been working very hard to hold and reduce costs despite all the turmoil with the renovation and construction projects. For FY 2006, ULAR per diem rates will be raised 2 percent. It is anticipated that once we finish with the R&C projects and move into larger more efficient facilities that these rates will be reduced.