

Editorial Board

Kathryn Bayne, MS, PhD, DVM

Associate Director for Accreditation, Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International, Bethesda, MD.

Joseph T. Bielitzki, MS, DVM

Program Manager, Defense Sciences Office, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Arlington, VA.

J. Roger Broderson, DVM, PhD

Director, Animal Care and Use, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Cyndi Brown, DVM

Associate Staff, Department of Avian and Exotic Pets, The Animal Medical Center, New York, NY.

Thomas M. Donnelly, DVM

The Kenneth S. Warren Institute, Ossining, NY.

Nina Hahn DVM, PhD, DACLAM

Associate Director, Office of Laboratory Animal Care, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.

Victoria Hampshire, VMD

Advanced Veterinary Applications, Bethesda, MD.

John M. Hicks, DVM, MPH

Veterinary Consultant, Pikesville, MD.

Paul Houghton

Biologist, Primate Products, Redwood City, CA.

Mary Lou James, BA, RLATG

Consultant, Regulatory Compliance, St. Louis, MO.

Bruce W. Kennedy, MS, RLATG

Facility Manager, Transgenic Core Facility, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA.

Joseph Knapka, PhD

Consultant, Laboratory Animal Nutrition, Brookeville, MD.

C. Max Lang, DVM

Professor and Chairman, Department of Comparative Medicine, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Pennsylvania State University, Hershey, PA.

Richard H. Latt, DVM

Director, Animal Resources Centre, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Sherry M. Lewis, PhD

Nutritionist/Research Scientist, National Center for Toxicological Research, Jefferson, AR.

Carol Cutler Linder, PhD

Assistant Director of Genetic Resources, The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, ME.

John A. Maher, MS, MBA, CMAR, RLATG

Senior Manager, BioResources, Wyeth Research, Pearl River, NY.

Gary R. Novak, RLATG

Research Associate and Manager, Johns Hopkins Oncology Center Laboratory Animal Resources, Baltimore, MD.

Fred W. Quimby, VMD, PhD

Director, Lab Animal Research Center, Rockefeller University, New York, NY.

John Curtis Seely, DVM, ACVP

Veterinary Pathologist, Experimental Pathology Laboratories, Research Triangle Park, NC.

Moshe Shalev, MSc, VMD

Vernon Hills, IL.

Jo Ellen Sherow, BS, LATG

Director, Research Compliance, Ohio University, Athens, OH.

Jerald Silverman, DVM

Professor and Director, Department of Animal Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA.

Michael K. Stoskopf, DVM, PhD

Professor and Director of Environmental Medicine Consortium, College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

Paul J. Upman, PhD

Senior Scientist, NAMSA, Northwood, OH.

Robert H. Weichbrod, PhD, MBA, RLATG

Animal Program Administrator, National Eye Institute, NIH, Bethesda, MD.

Steven H. Weisbroth, DVM

President, AnMed/Biosafe, Inc., Rockville, MD.

Axel Wolff, MS, DVM

Senior Assurance Officer, Division of Assurances, OLAW, NIH, Bethesda, MD.

Adoption: The Unrealized 'R'?

USDA Policy #12 requires that investigators “consider alternatives to procedures that may cause more than momentary or slight pain or distress to the animals and provide a written narrative of the methods used and sources consulted to determine the availability of alternatives, including refinements, reductions, and replacements.” It is likely that in many cases, considerations of such refinements do not extend past the life of the research project.

However, in some cases the refinement process can continue beyond the end of the experiment, to the final disposition of the animal subjects. One such possibility is the development of a research animal adoption program; after all, not all experiments necessitate that the animals be euthanized at the study's conclusion. Breeders and control animals, as well as animals used in certain behavioral or dietary studies, may be perfectly suitable for transitioning to life in a human household.

There is a large pool of people looking to adopt animals, and the Humane Society of the United States estimates that between 3 and 4 million cats and dogs are adopted annually from American shelters alone. Laboratory animals can make excellent pets for a number of reasons: these animals may have already been through socialization programs, their health status should be thoroughly documented, and they will have received all of the necessary vaccinations.

In this issue, authors Carbone *et al.*, (p. 37) discuss two institutional adoption programs—located at Cornell University and the University of California, San Francisco—and outline means by which a facility can work with the surrounding community to find homes for animals that are no longer needed in research. Whether a facility chooses to deal directly with potential adopters or to work with a local shelter to find homes for the animals, the development of a research animal adoption program can be highly rewarding for all involved.

Not only can a program of this type be a huge morale boost for facility employees by allowing some research animals to live out their remaining years with a loving family, but a research animal adoption program can also be a public relations boon for a facility. Facilitating the adoption of dogs, cats, rabbits, and even some farm animals, rather than euthanizing them, is direct proof of an institution's dedication to the full implementation of the '3 Rs'.

This is not to say that adoption programs should be implemented without careful consideration. Successful adoptions cannot be guaranteed and, considering today's litigious climate, the risk to the institution from a failed placement must also be weighed against the potential benefits.

Neither the Animal Welfare Act nor the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* specifically addresses the issue of adoption for former research animals, leaving it to each institution to decide whether to implement such a program. Adoption may not be right for every institution, but it certainly doesn't hurt to consider it, and the advice provided by Carbone *et al.*, should provide food for thought.