

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL RESEARCH

PRESS RELEASE
29 October 2004

NACLAR Issues Guidelines on the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Singapore

- 1 **Guidelines for the proper care and use of animals for scientific purposes in Singapore will soon be available from the National Advisory Committee for Laboratory Animal Research (NACLAR). In conjunction with the release of the NACLAR *Guidelines*, research institutions which use animals must be licensed under the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA)'s Animals and Birds (Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes) Rules, which will come into effect on 15 November 2004.**
- 2 The scope of the NACLAR *Guidelines* covers all aspects of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes including their use in teaching, field trials, environmental studies, research, diagnosis, product testing, and the production of biological products.
- 3 Professor Bernard Tan, Chairman of NACLAR, explained the principles behind the NACLAR *Guidelines*, "The NACLAR *Guidelines* aim to promote humane and responsible care and use of animals for scientific purposes in Singapore. The *Guidelines* are important for Singapore's biomedical research efforts, as at present, the use of laboratory animals cannot be avoided in such research efforts, which are crucial for the advancement of human healthcare. In essence, the NACLAR guidelines are based on the principles of the 3Rs – Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. Replacement of animals with other methods; Reduction of the number of animals used; and Refinement of projects and techniques used to minimize impact on animals. We will continue to monitor developments in biomedical research to ensure the *Guidelines* remain relevant and appropriate."
- 4 NACLAR's *Guidelines* have been adapted from the best practices of countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US, and organisations such as the Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) and the European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals Used for Experimental and Other Scientific Purposes (1986). These countries and organisations have laid down stringent *Guidelines* and procedures governing the use of animals in research.

- 5 Said Prof Tan, "In preparing these *Guidelines*, we have sought a broad and representative spectrum of views, to ensure that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, meets the highest possible standards. The diverse representation within the Committee also allowed us to draw upon the most current and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of animal care, and benchmark the *Guidelines* against best practices."
- 6 The Committee, which comprises representatives from academia, research organisations, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), as well as legal and ethical specialists, developed the *Guidelines* after extensive review and consultation with the general public, users of animals in public and private research institutions, companies, educational institutions, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), religious groups and other relevant bodies such as the National Biosafety Committee and the Genetic Modification Advisory Committee (GMAC).
- 7 NACLAR was established in 2003 to develop national guidelines for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes in Singapore. On 22 August 2003, the *Guidelines on the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* was released to the scientific community and general public in draft form. Input was then sought from leading experts, the general public; users of animals in public and private research institutions, companies, educational institutions, the SPCA, religious groups and other relevant bodies. All comments received were carefully considered by the Committee before the final text of the *Guidelines* was decided upon.
- 8 The NACLAR *Guidelines* can be accessed online at www.feedback.gov.sg from 5 November 2004.

Licensing of Research Institutions which use Animals for Scientific Purposes

- 9 From 15 Nov 2004, any research institution that uses animals for scientific purposes must obtain a licence from AVA. This is when the Animals and Birds (Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes) Rules will come into operation. As part of the licensing requirements, a research institution must comply with the NACLAR *Guidelines* and allow AVA to carry out inspection of their facilities.
- 10 Existing research institutions that use animals for scientific purposes must submit their licence applications to AVA by 15 Jan 2005. Besides this two -month grace period, the institutions will be given some time to fully comply with the NACLAR *Guidelines*.
- 11 With effect from 15 Nov 2004, an existing institution can have up to:
- 6 months to establish an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).
 - 12 months to engage an attending veterinarian
 - 18 months to complete the required training of all its staff and animal users
 - 18 months to meet infrastructure-related requirements

Penalties for non-compliance with AVA Rules

- 12 Under both the Animals and Birds Act and Animals and Birds (Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes) Rules, a person committing an offence may be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.
- 13 The offences include improper care and use of animals, carrying out research on animals without a licence from AVA or the approval of an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.
- 14 AVA can also issue directives, or suspend or revoke a licence of the research institution should there be non-compliances. Notwithstanding these measures, AVA's objective remains to work with the research community to ensure proper care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

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Notes to the Editor

About NACLAR

The National Advisory Committee for Laboratory Animal Research (NACLAR) was formed in February 2003 to develop national guidelines for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes in Singapore, taking all relevant scientific, ethical and legal issues into consideration. The Committee comprises members from academia, research organisations, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), legal and ethical specialists.

NACLAR has three sub-committees, each with a specific focus:

- General guidelines on animal care and use for scientific purposes based on ethical, legal and scientific considerations.
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs).
- Training of personnel involved in the care and use of animals in research.

NACLAR Committee Members

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Prof Bernard Tan

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Chief Executive Officer
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