Safety and Hygiene
(American Association for Laboratory Animal Science; LAT 2001)

Safety matters should be a part of the standard operating procedures of every laboratory setting. At the time of hiring, and also at regular intervals, employees should be informed of potential biohazards in their work environment. Employees should receive instruction on necessary precautions to be taken and the proper use of safety equipment. Facility employees should be advised that the use of safety equipment is mandatory. This equipment must be available to employees for any type of risk or exposure they might encounter. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to enforce safety rules and set the example for his or her employees to follow. Once appropriate information and instruction have been given, it is the employee’s responsibility to perform the job duties in a safe manner.

Employees and students need to develop an awareness that laboratory equipment, uniforms, shoes, and gloves can act as disease fomites. Soiled uniforms and shoes should not be worn home or laundered there. Likewise these same uniforms should not be worn in the animal room then to lunch, class, etc. Good personal hygiene needs to be enforced and students as well as employees must have an appreciation of the potential impact of cross-contamination on a research study with animals.

Training, documentation, and awareness are important parts of any good safety program. Please see the following Purdue website and see how your department can implement safety and compliance throughout the campus.

http://www.purdue.edu/rem/home/forms/ispcheck.pdf
http://www.purdue.edu/rem/
Starting October 29 and continuing through November 1, 2007, six representatives of the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC-I - http://www.aaalac.org), conducted a visit to evaluate the Purdue University animal care and use program and facilities. These representatives toured every animal facility, to include those at ASREC, Feldun, and SIPAC. They visited many faculty laboratories and reviewed many animal care and use protocols and records.

For more than 35 years, the scientific community has voluntarily participated in the AAALAC-I accreditation program. A private, nonprofit organization, AAALAC-I evaluates organizations using animals in research, teaching or testing. AAALAC-I awards accreditation to those organizations that exceed the minimum standards for the care and use of animals. AAALAC-I is not a regulatory body and does not make or enforce regulations. Instead, it uses widely accepted guidelines and best practices, such as the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" and the "Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching" in determining the status of animal care and use programs. The Purdue program became fully accredited in 2006. Purdue is one of nearly 700 accredited animal care and use programs in the world.

Purdue University employs an animal care staff to provide daily care for over 22,000 animals. AAALAC-I accreditation would not be possible without the cooperation and efforts of every member of the University's animal care and use community. Credit and thanks go to each member of the University's animal care and use community for making this what should be considered a successful site visit.

At the post-site visit briefing, the site visitors noted the following areas for commendation: 1) personnel were knowledgeable, dedicated, concerned for welfare of animals; 2) impressed with cleanliness and upkeep of facilities; 3) impressed that for the number of animals housed, very few clinical health problems / overall animal health good; 4) impressed with the PACUC, especially the process for identification of personnel via the Q Form procedure; 5) impressed with system for tracking of animals used; and 6) considered the DEA Controlled Substance oversight strong.

While the AAALAC-I site visitors commended Purdue for the overall high quality of its animal care and use program, they also provided a list of suggested improvements to the program. Purdue will be expected to make steady progress toward implementing these suggested improvements and report on that progress to AAALAC-I in order to be fully re-accredited.

Of these identified items, AAALAC-I Council may classify one as a mandatory item for Purdue’s correction in order to continue full accreditation. This item falls into the category of human safety as related to the use of animals in research. The reviewers discussed a number of human health and safety issues noted during visits to animal housing areas and investigator laboratories. The reviewers did comment that while any one of the listed items by itself would not be a major issue, when these items were taken as a whole, they lead to the finding that safety as it pertains to animal research activities needs strengthening. The findings fall under the general headings of hazard identification, awareness and assessment of
individuals performing tasks; training and education; use of personnel protective equipment for avoidance or control of exposure; and labeling.

PACUC, LAP, and REM are preparing suggestions for modification of the program in the health and safety area. As these changes are considered and instituted, investigators and animal facility personnel will be informed as applicable.

Other items suggested for improvement included: intensification of protocol review; establishing a more uniform policy on endpoint criteria; establishing a uniform standard in the area of environmental enrichment, especially as it pertains to individually housed rodents; increasing frequency of post-approval monitoring visits; strengthening the recordkeeping and communication at those units where LAP does not provide the veterinary clinical care; and some facility specific physical plant and equipment items.

The site team will present their findings and make its recommendation to the AAALAC-I Council which will meet in January 2008. AAALAC-I Council will then make a final decision regarding our continued accreditation status. Purdue can expect to receive a letter detailing those findings and recommendations in February or March 2008.

Maintaining accreditation demonstrates Purdue’s commitment to responsible animal care and use. AAALAC-I accreditation is a symbol of quality, and assurance that when animals are used to advance scientific progress, their well-being is protected. At the same time, it enhances the overall quality of science and promotes the validity of research in which animals are used.

AAALAC-I accreditation offers several benefits to Purdue:

- Signals a quality program: Accreditation demonstrates that Purdue is serious about setting, achieving, and maintaining high standards for animal care and use.
- Enhances scientific validity: Reliable results in scientific research involving animals depend on superior animal care. Accreditation engages scientists, managers, and administrators in a rigorous assessment of the Purdue program, ultimately resulting in better research practices and outcomes.
- Demonstrates accountability: Accreditation demonstrates a willingness to go above and beyond what is required by law to conduct animal research in a humane manner. It tells the community that we are committed to responsible animal research.
- Provides assurances to funding sources: Many funding sources view AAALAC-I accreditation as a commitment to program excellence, and as an assurance that animal use will be justified and humane and regulations will be followed.

Bill Ferner, DVM
Director, LAP

International Laboratory Animal Technician Week is January 27 – February 2, 2008

Supervisors and investigators are encouraged to thank the animal care staff and the technicians working in their areas.
Upcoming PACUC Meetings

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<th>Meeting Date</th>
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<tr>
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Triennial and Annual Reviews of Approved Protocols

Recently, there have been several cases where investigators have not returned their Triennial Renewal of Approved Protocol or Annual Review Form on time.

I would like to take the opportunity to stress the importance of returning these forms in a timely manner.

The USDA requires that protocols be reviewed annually. This is a one-page form and requires a minimal amount of time to complete.

The Assurance that Purdue has on file with the Public Health Service/NIH, stipulates that protocol applications will be reviewed every three years. Protocol approvals are only granted for a 3 year period. When that 3 year approval date expires, you are no longer able to utilize the animals approved on that protocol. Hence, the importance of returning your Triennial Review in a timely manner to ensure that PACUC has enough time to review and re-approve it prior to the protocol expiring.

If you have any questions regarding the Annual Review or Triennial Renewal process, please contact me directly at ldsnider@purdue.edu.

Lisa Snider
PACUC Administrator

LAT Course Offering

Are you interested in expanding your working knowledge in the laboratory animal field?

The technician certification designations of ALAT, LAT, and LATG offered by the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, are well known and widely used throughout the varied fields of laboratory animal care. In fact, these certifications have come to be a common requirement for a lab animal care position.

This spring we will offer an informal, 16 week training course focused on the material covered in the LAT training manual. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss and collaborate on pertinent issues.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Carol Dowell at 494-2521 or dowellc@purdue.edu, and more detailed information will be sent to you.

The course is scheduled to begin Friday, February 22, 2008 (subject to change), and will meet weekly from 12:30 – 2pm in AHF 1082.