

# NAEAC news

Official Newsletter of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

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## FROM THE CHAIR



NAEAC's eighth annual report (for the year ended 31 December 2007) since the passage of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 was released on Tuesday 15 July 2008. (Copies of the report are available from the Animal Welfare Directorate and at [http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/naeac/annual-report/naeac-ar\\_07.pdf](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/naeac/annual-report/naeac-ar_07.pdf). (I record my appreciation of the work done on the collection and analysis of statistics by AECs, Linda Carsons and her AWD colleagues, and Lynne Milne.)

The headline facts were:

- The 22.6 percent reduction between 2006 and 2007 in total animals manipulated;
- Little variation over three years when a rolling average is calculated;
- Nearly 80 percent of animals manipulated classified as experiencing "no" or "little" suffering;
- Just over eight percent in the "severe" or "very severe" grading.

A highlight of the first half of NAEAC's year so far has been our visit to Dunedin in May. In addition to our quarterly meeting, we visited AgResearch at Invermay and various sites at the University of Otago. These visits, although shorter than we would wish, are of great value to NAEAC members in emphasising the diversity of code-holders' activities. Our thanks go to Grant Shackell and his colleagues at Invermay and Greg Jones, John Schofield and their colleagues at OU.

Another notable event, attended by a number of AEC members as well as researchers, principally from New Zealand and Australia, was the June conference of ANZCCART. Contrary to press reports quoting Mark Eden, the conference was held in Auckland and was rated by all those to whom I have spoken as a decided success. The proceedings, when available, will contain a wealth of valuable material.

The conference provided the occasion for the presentation of the NAEAC Three Rs award for 2008 to Dr Julie Dalziel on behalf of four members of the Biomembrane Laboratory at AgResearch Grasslands Research Centre, Palmerston North. Dr James Dunlop (leader), Thai Phung, Dr Yan-Li Zhang and Dr Dalziel received the award for developing a prototype assay test for seafood toxins that has the potential to replace testing on mice. (See page 7).

I was honoured to be asked by ANZCCART to open the conference and took the opportunity to comment on a number of issues of concern to NAEAC. For instance, on protest activity:

There is, as you all know, a range of positions taken by those who are opposed to the use of animals in RTT. One of the important judgements to be made from time to time is whether there is value in opening and maintaining a dialogue with some groups and individuals. ANZCCART has taken this route in inviting critics to conferences in the past.

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Those who take issue with the use of animals in RTT express their opposition in different ways. Misinformation and some forms of protest do not contribute to good public policy. In a phrase attributed, I think, to Hillary Clinton, I find that most encounters with the media are devoted to “neutralising negativity”.

Informed debate, on the other hand, can assist the promotion of high standards of animal welfare and the continued efforts to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in RTT.

In NAEAC, and in collaboration with ANZCCART and other interested organisations, we have given high priority to considering strategies that will enable the case for animal use in RTT to be given a fair hearing, in the face of concerted protest campaigns. This is not to be portrayed as a “war” against anything – a fair-minded balance is what all parties should be seeking.

But there are times when I detect a measure of criticism in some quarters of the role being played by NAEAC – a wish for us to be, in that rather over-worked word, more “proactive”.

I take this opportunity to say that I see the role of NAEAC as principally to assure the Minister and the New Zealand public of the integrity of the regulatory process enshrined in Part 6 of the Animal Welfare Act. That role is played out, of course, in the context of the science that is being undertaken, and NAEAC in its annual report and dealings with the media does not resile from laying out the gains to society that are the outcomes from that research.

The primary responsibility for making the case for the value of animal use rests, however, with the research community – individually and collectively – with the Royal Society and ANZCCART (and I note the strong support recently reaffirmed by the Royal Society in London). It lies with MORST, the universities and the CRIs and with those who benefit from the research and testing – the health service, the pharmaceutical companies, the veterinary profession, and the farmers...

I know very well the understandable reluctance of researchers or their host institutions to draw attention to the work that they are doing. I have talked with people whose families have been exposed to quite unacceptable action by protest groups. But unless the positive side of the equation is exposed the high ground is captured by those whose position, however sincerely held, is at best partial and at worst deliberately misleading.

I referred to NAEAC’s strategic planning. I emphasised the importance of keeping abreast of developments in science and technology that might have implications

for New Zealand’s regulatory regime; and encouraged researchers and AECs to bring them to the attention of NAEAC. I also underlined the several international dimensions of our strategic vision – the frontiers of science, tightening welfare standards in other jurisdictions and the regulatory restrictions applied to our exports.

I offered the opinion that the concept of international accreditation of laboratories has a particular attraction; and, in that context, welcomed among us from Hawaii, Dr Kathryn Bayne of the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC International). (Dr Bayne’s visit to New Zealand is covered later on page 8.)

We are looking forward to the AEC workshop to be held in November. We are pleased that Dr Mark Fisher, chair of ANZCCART and a member of the Bioethics Council, has accepted our invitation to be the keynote speaker – his Cam Reid Oration at the ANZCCART conference was a very thoughtful contribution to the animal ethics debate. Other speakers include David Bayvel, David Mellor, Greg Jones, Nita Harding, Dave Morgan, Virginia Williams, Justine Stewart and Linda Carsons.

An important session will consider new guidelines on the severity scale (following examination and discussion of the review by Mellor, Williams and Marbrook). Generally, we have shaped a looser agenda than in previous years, providing greater opportunity for discussion of issues raised by AEC representatives. AECs will be invited soon to let us have notice of these topics.

We have set aside a day and a half in October to consider a second batch of codes that come up for five-year review. Affected code holders have guidance about the issues that attracted particular attention last year.

John R Martin  
Chair

### Error

In the last issue of NAEAC News, Dr Justine Stewart was incorrectly referred to in the heading accompanying the item in the Membership Changes section as Dr Janine Stewart. We apologise for this error, which occurred in the layout stage of production.

# NEW ZEALAND THREE RS PROGRAMME – MAJOR ACTIVITIES JANUARY 2007 TO AUGUST 2008

## Papers, Chapters and Abstracts include:

Since the inception of the Programme, participants have prepared a number of papers and book chapters and have made a number of conference presentations accompanied by abstracts and/or published proceedings.

## Fourth New Zealand Pain Society Meeting – Abstracts

Diesch, T.J., Mellor, D.J. and Johnson, C.B. (2007). Neurological development and pain responsiveness. *Abstract Booklet of the 4th Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Pain Society*, 17-19 August 2007, Palmerston North, p 19.

Johnson, C.B., Gibson, T.J., Stafford, K.J. and Mellor, D.J. (2007). Painless studies of pain including somatic and visceral pain models. *Abstract Booklet of the 4th Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Pain Society*, 17-19 August 2007, Palmerston North, p 20.

Johnson, C.B., Murrell, J.C., Stafford, K.J. and Mellor, D.J. (2007). Human and animal pain: novel studies informing pain management. *Abstract Booklet of the 4th Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Pain Society*, 17-19 August 2007, Palmerston North, p 15-16.

## Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences – Abstracts

Diesch, T.J., Mellor, D.J., Johnson, C.B. and Lentle, R.G. (2007). Responsiveness to painful stimuli in anaesthetised newborn and young animals of varying neurological maturity (wallaby joeys, rat pups and lambs). *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences - Review Progress Made Towards the 3Rs - Abstracts* p 135.

Johnson, C.B., Murrell, J., Gibson, T.G. and Mellor, D.J. (2007). Innovative refinements to anaesthesia techniques can deliver pain research without pain. *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences - Review Progress Made Towards the 3Rs - Abstracts* p 17.

Mellor, D.J., Diesch, T.J., Gunn, A.J. and Bennet, L. (2007). Fetal 'awareness' and 'pain': what precautions should be taken to safeguard fetal welfare during experiment? *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences - Review Progress Made Towards the 3Rs - Abstracts* p 15.

Mellor, D.J., Schofield, J.C. and Williams, V.M. (2007). Underreporting of the Three Rs deployment that occurs during the planning of protocols that precedes their submission to animal ethics committees. *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences - Review Progress Made Towards the 3Rs - Abstracts* p 129.

## Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching, 2007 Conference – Presentation: proceedings in press

Mellor, D.J. (2007). Getting it right when studying the fetus and newborn - is pain relief necessary? *Proceedings of the ANZCCART Conference on "Getting it Right"*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 10-12 July 2007, 12 pages (in press).

## International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management – Presentations and Papers

Mellor, D.J. (2007). Is it necessary to provide pain relief during invasive procedures on the fetus or newborn? In: Unified Against Pain, *Proceedings of the International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management (Bovine, Equine, Public Health and Animal Industry)*, Montreal, Quebec, Canada Conference, 1-3 November 2007, pp 329-344.

Johnson, C.B. (2007). Measuring pain in animals: neurophysiological techniques and perspectives. *Proceedings of the International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management (Bovine, Equine, Public Health and Animal Industry)*, Montreal, Canada, 1-3 November 2007, pp 345-351.

## Proceedings of Sixth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences – Abstracts

Diesch, T.J., Mellor, D.J., Johnson, C.B. and Lentle, R.G. (2008). Responsiveness to painful stimuli in anaesthetised newborn and young animals of varying neurological maturity (wallaby joeys, rat pups and lambs). *AATEX Journal 14*, Special Issue, 549-552.

Johnson, C.B., Murrell, J.C., Gibson, T.G. and Mellor, D.J. (2008). Innovative refinements to anaesthesia techniques can deliver pain research without pain. *AATEX Journal 14*, Special Issue, 97-100.

Mellor, D.J., Diesch, T.J., Gunn, A.J. and Bennet, L. (2008). Fetal 'awareness' and 'pain': what precautions should be taken to safeguard fetal welfare during experiments? *AATEX Journal 14*, Special Issue, 79-83.

Mellor, D.J., Schofield, J.C. and Williams, V.M. (2008). Underreporting of the Three Rs deployment that occurs during the planning of protocols that precedes their submission to animal ethics committees. *AATEX Journal 14*, Special Issue, 785-788.

## Additional Papers and Chapters

Henare, S.J., Mellor, D.J., Lentle, R.G. and Moughan, P.J. (2008). An appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of newborn and juvenile rat models for researching gastrointestinal development. *Laboratory Animals* 42, 231-245.

Murrell, J.C., Mellor, D.J. and Johnson, C.B. (2008). Anaesthesia and analgesia in the foetus and newborn. *Anesthesia and Analgesia in Laboratory Animals, 2nd Edition*, pp 593-608. R.E. Fish, P.J. Danneman, M.J. Brown, A.M. Karas, Eds, Elsevier, Academic Press, New York, USA.

Johnson, C.B., Sylvester, S.P., Stafford, K.J., Mitchinson, S.L., Ward, R.N. and Mellor, D.J. (2008). Effects of age on the electroencephalographic response to castration in lambs anaesthetised using halothane in oxygen from birth to six weeks old. *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia* (in press).

## Research Projects

### Re-evaluation of the Humaneness of Decapitation as a Euthanasia Method

Decapitation of conscious birds and small laboratory rodents is an approved method of euthanasia. It is generally considered that there would be a virtually immediate onset of insensibility with that procedure. However, there remain the questions of how well founded that conclusion is, and related to that, how long the severed head remains conscious.

The development at Massey University of a method of measuring particular characteristics of brain electrical activity in anaesthetised animals to assess noxious sensory input in response to potentially painful stimuli (Johnson, Murrell, Gibson and Mellor, 2008 – see above), offers the opportunity to explore decapitation in a way that has not been used before. Accordingly, such decapitation studies are currently under way in domestic chickens and are planned for laboratory rats.

### Re-evaluation of the Humaneness of Exposure to High Carbon Dioxide Level as a Euthanasia Method

Exposure of conscious birds and animals to high levels of carbon dioxide in breathed air is an approved method for rapidly inducing insensibility and death. However, there remains the question of whether or not insensibility occurs before there is noxious sensory input due to irritation of the lining of the respiratory tract and any experience of breathlessness. The question of noxious sensory input can be examined, as above, using the model that explores brain electrical activity in anaesthetised birds and animals. Whether or not breathlessness can be assessed in this way is not yet clear. Studies are planned in the first

instance in domestic chickens to examine responses to high carbon dioxide levels in this new way.

Professor David J Mellor  
NZ Three Rs Programme Co-ordinator  
Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre  
Massey University

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## AEC SERVICE AWARDS

NAEAC has made a further two awards to members of animal ethics committees in recognition of their service. Both of these were to members on AgResearch Ltd's Invermay Animal Ethics Committee. The awards were presented in January 2008.

Russell Adam is the Invermay Farm Manager and has served on the AEC for 20 years. He has a wide knowledge of farm animals and is closely involved in monitoring animals during research projects.

Dr Bruce Bissett is the New Zealand Veterinary Association nominee on the AEC. He has also served on the committee for 20 years. As a practising veterinarian dealing with farm animals, his professional assessments and insights have been very valuable to the AEC over the years.

### Nominations

AECs/code holders are welcome to submit nominations to NAEAC at any time for AEC Service Awards for members who have provided meritorious service for at least five years. Names of those receiving awards are published only with their agreement.

# CODES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT – APPROVALS, NOTIFICATIONS & REVOCATIONS

(since the last issue of NAEAC News)

If you would like to check on whether a particular organisation has an approved code of ethical conduct please contact this office.

## Codes of ethical conduct approved since January 2008

(pursuant to section 91 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999)

- Lincoln University

## Codes of ethical conduct transferred

(pursuant to section 93 of the Animal Welfare Act)

- Ancare Scientific Ltd (from Ancare New Zealand Ltd)

## Code holder name changes

Nil

## Amendments to codes of ethical conduct approved after consultation with NAEAC

(pursuant to section 96 of the Animal Welfare Act)

Nil

## Notifications to MAF of minor amendments to codes of ethical conduct made during 2007/08 or 2008/09 (pursuant to section 95 of the Animal Welfare Act)

- Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd
- Schering-Plough Animal Health Ltd

## Notifications to MAF of arrangements to use an existing code of ethical conduct since January 2008 (pursuant to section 84 of the Animal Welfare Act)

- Ancrum Consultancies (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- Aoraki Polytechnic (to use Lincoln University's code)
- Biocell Corporation Ltd (to use PharmVet Solutions' code)
- Carne Technologies Ltd (to use PharmVet Solutions' code)
- Connovation Ltd (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- DairyNZ Ltd (to use AgResearch Ltd's code) (name change)
- Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand Ltd – Lincoln campus (to use the

National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Ltd's code)

- ImmunoEthical Associates (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- Intervet Ltd (to use Schering-Plough Animal Health Ltd's code)
- Jurox Pty Ltd (to use Estendart Ltd's code)
- Pest Control Research Ltd (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- Pest-Tech Ltd (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- PGG Wrightson Seeds (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- The New Zealand Merino Company Ltd (to use Lincoln University's code) (renewal, code expired)
- Wellington Institute of Technology (to use Estendart Ltd's code)

## Revocations of approval because approvals personal to code holder

(pursuant to section 93 of the Animal Welfare Act)

Nil

## Codes expired and not renewed

Nil

## Arrangements lapsed and not renewed

Nil

## Termination of arrangements made pursuant to section 84 of the Animal Welfare Act

- Fonterra Innovation
- Impian Technologies Ltd
- Wellington Institute of Technology (to use Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology's code)

## Approvals by the Director-General of MAF for the use of non-human hominids

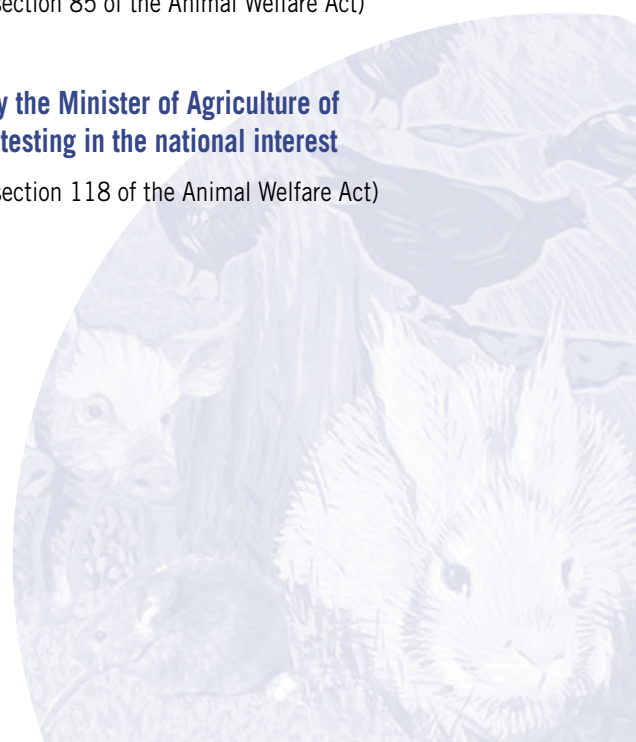
(pursuant to section 85 of the Animal Welfare Act)

Nil

## Approvals by the Minister of Agriculture of research or testing in the national interest

(pursuant to section 118 of the Animal Welfare Act)

Nil



## NEWS ROUND UP

A summary of items of interest from the newsletters, journals and abstracts which cross our desks.

### Identification of appropriate measures for the assessment of laboratory mouse welfare

Through consultation with experts in the field, the authors identified resource-input measures and animal-based outcomes that could be used to assess laboratory mouse welfare, with the main focus on characteristics of the staff, performance of husbandry and care procedures, health and wellbeing of the mice, and the provision and use of cage resources.

M C Leach, P D Thornton and D C J Main, *Animal Welfare*, Vol 17(2), 161-170, 2008

### Simple housing changes may improve laboratory rat welfare

This article suggests that providing partial visual cover in cages (eg walls alternating opaque and clear stripes) may reduce anxiety and habituation time and thereby improve welfare and the validity of research data from behavioural tests performed outside the home cage.

S Cloutier and R C Newberry, *AWI Quarterly*, Vol 56(4), 2007

Also available on line at [www.awionline.org](http://www.awionline.org)

### More welfare-friendly rat housing

This paper assessed the practical use of a housing device known as a "Buddy Barrier" that allows social stimulation in a paired-housing situation while at the same time permitting the collection of individual measures that traditionally require individual-housing.

Boggiano MM, Cavigelli SA, Dorsey JR, Kelley CE, Ragan CM, Chandler-Laney PC,

*Physiol Behav.* 2008 May 15 at [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18565550?ordinalpos=7&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18565550?ordinalpos=7&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum)

### Animal carers suffer in silence

This article highlights the difficulties faced by staff in research facilities who spend their time caring for animals and then having to euthanase them. Some coping strategies are also discussed.

Andy Coghlan, *NewScientist*, 29 March 2008, p 8-9 ([www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com))

## 6th World Congress on Alternatives & Animal Use in the Life Sciences

In the last issue of NAEAC News we brought you a brief report on this congress, held in August 2007. The proceedings are now available online: <http://altweb.jhsph.edu/wc6/>

### Laboratory rodents

The latest issue of the *ILAR Journal* is devoted to the topic of detection and management of microbial contamination in laboratory rodents.

*ILAR Journal*, Vol 49(3), 2008

### Guidelines on the assessment and alleviation of pain and distress in research animals

The Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) published "Guidelines to promote the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes: The assessment and alleviation of pain and distress in research animals" in May this year. Although Australia-focussed, these guidelines are relevant to researchers and members of animal ethics committees in other countries as well. With species-specific signs of pain and distress, dose rates for anaesthetics and analgesics, and environmental enrichment strategies, the guidelines also contain information on planning, conducting and reviewing research proposals; pain management; humane killing and euthanasia; polyclonal antibody production; tumour induction; foetal and embryonic studies; toxicology; and wildlife research. The guidelines are available at:

[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/ea18.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/ea18.pdf)

### Procedures for Improving Welfare of Animal Pest Species in Research Issued

A series of Australian Model Standard Operating Procedures has recently been released to assist researchers involved in animal pest research (primarily rabbits, goats, pigs, foxes and cats). Topics covered include best practice for capture, holding and transport, restraint and handling, marking, and sampling. Although focused on Australian species and practices, the material will also be relevant to this kind of research in New Zealand.

For more information and copies of the procedures, see: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/majorpubs/guides/model-sops-research-pest-animals>.

## NAEAC CHAIRPERSON HONOURED

In the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours it was announced that NAEAC Chairperson, John Martin, is to be a Companion of the Queen's Service Order, for public services. John has had a distinguished career in the public service and, after his retirement from the post of Deputy Director-General of the Department of Health, became a senior lecturer in public policy in the School of Government at Victoria University. A life member and Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration of New Zealand, John served as Chairman of ANZCCART New Zealand before assuming his current role as Chairman of NAEAC and ex officio member of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

John Martin said that the appointment was a complete surprise. He had had a rich and varied career since joining the Public Service as a cadet in 1953; that in itself was sufficient reward. His association over the past ten years with first ANZCCART and now NAEAC and NAWAC has been an unexpected but much enjoyed experience. He owed a great deal to the people with whom he had worked throughout his career, not least the members of the animal welfare committees and the Animal Welfare Directorate team. He was looking forward to the continuing challenges posed by the use of animals in RTT and working with colleagues in Wellington, in the AECs and in the wider community.

## ANZCCART NEW ZEALAND ANIMAL CARE TECHNICIAN'S AWARD

The 2008 winner of the ANZCCART New Zealand Animal Care Technician's Award is Susan Keall, Senior Technical Officer - Conservation Ecology at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). Dr Mark Fisher, ANZCCART New Zealand



Chair, presented Susan with her award at the ANZCCART Conference held recently in Auckland.

A key area of Susan's work since 1991 has been responsibility for a captive colony of tuatara at VUW where she holds primary responsibility for the health and security of these animals. Her work has included incubation of eggs, "head-starting" juveniles for reintroduction to the wild, and maintenance of a colony on public display. Success of the head-start programme is reliant on good follow-up maintenance of juveniles, through all stages including 5–8 years at the head-start facility, during transit to the release location, and post-release in the new habitat. Susan has been integrally involved in all of these stages, monitoring health and survival and also advising head-

start facility staff on husbandry.

Susan's position at VUW in supporting research requires training of new staff and post-graduate students in husbandry aspects of their own research projects. She also provides advice on husbandry to other organisations with captive tuatara, including San Diego, Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton Zoos, and Nga Manu Nature Reserve. She advises the Department of Conservation's Tuatara Recovery Group on tuatara husbandry and management of translocated populations. Several Māori iwi groups are developing education outreach programmes involving the use of live captive tuatara, and Susan also advises and mentors these groups.

ANZCCART New Zealand established the annual national award to recognise the significant contribution made by an individual New Zealand-based technician, particularly in regard to the welfare of the animals.

## THREE RS AWARD

Four members of AgResearch's Biomembrane Laboratory have been selected as the recipients of the 2008 NAEAC Three Rs Award.



Dr Julie Dalziel, Thai Phung, Dr Yan-Li Zhang and Dr James Dunlop receive the award in recognition of their work in developing a prototype assay test for seafood toxins. Currently the main internationally validated biological method to measure

toxicity is testing on mice. This research aims to develop an alternative method to reduce the number of laboratory animals required to test neurotoxicity of algal toxins in contaminated shellfish.

The prototype test measures the effects of toxins and other compounds rapidly (in about an hour), compared with the days required when using mice. It also has the potential to be developed into a user-friendly format that could be used outside the laboratory. The Biomembrane Laboratory is now also using this assay technology to develop a test to detect the wanted and unwanted effects of potential new drugs.

This national award is co-ordinated by NAEAC and is now in its sixth year. It is made to an individual, group or institution within New Zealand that epitomises best practice with regard to the Three Rs. This year's Award, for which there were several high calibre nominations, was generously sponsored by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

## VISIT OF DR KATHRYN BAYNE, ASSOCIATION FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF LABORATORY ANIMAL CARE INTERNATIONAL

Dr Bayne, Global Director of AAALAC International, spoke about AAALAC accreditation to representatives from nine different institutions at seminars in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, with considerable interest shown in the process and rationale behind AAALAC's assessment and accreditation programmes.



Participants were particularly impressed with the focus on this being a process of peer review as opposed to an inspection – Dr Bayne described it as “a communication-intensive programme of evaluation and support, stressing application of performance standards and professional judgment rather than inspection and enforcement of engineering standards.”

Dr Bayne was complimentary about the New Zealand system of oversight of the use of animals in research, testing and teaching, describing it as “a model of excellence”. The additional advantage she sees for New Zealand institutions (particularly those with international connections) in achieving AAALAC accreditation is in gaining a degree of harmonisation in the quality of care provided to experimental animals and the animals' welfare status. The resultant minimisation of variables and greater reproducibility of results and statistical significance of data, and hence greater comparability of studies, is important in an era when international collaborations are increasingly common in the scientific world, including the contracting in and out of projects and the greater number of multinational corporations. Dr Bayne's figures showed that over 750 institutions around the world are currently accredited, with the number increasing every year and 30 percent of new applications now coming from Asian countries.

## AVOIDING DUPLICATION OF RESEARCH INVOLVING ANIMALS

In response to a request from the Minister, a subcommittee of NAEAC members has prepared a paper on options for avoiding or minimising the duplication of animal-based research. In doing so, the members stressed the importance of distinguishing “duplication” from the terms “replication” and “repetition”, both of which are legitimate; the first as a fundamental component of the scientific method – confirmation allowed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999; the second as a requirement by regulatory agencies to ensure products are fit for purpose.

Duplication of animal experiments, on the other hand, is unacceptable because animals are needlessly manipulated if the outcomes are already known. The legislation permits “duplication” only where the original experiment was found to be flawed. Duplication is likely to occur mainly when a researcher is unaware that the experiment or test has already been done because results have not been published. This may be because:

- the research “failed” and was not considered worth publishing;
- the research findings were commercially sensitive;
- the research is still in progress.

NAEAC would like to remind AECs of the need to have procedures in place to ensure the avoidance of duplication of research, including making specific requests of researchers to confirm, in research applications, that they have undertaken relevant investigations for avoiding failed or duplicate research. Options may include literature searches, personal networks and/ or patent searches.

## INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN AECs

NAEAC is aware that, from time to time, AECs may be faced with questions that they may not have the expertise to deal with. Many AECs and their organisations are likely to have networks within the scientific community to which they can turn for advice. However, this may be more problematic for smaller organisations. NAEAC wishes to remind AECs that it is willing to act as a point of contact for information exchange among AECs.

This newsletter is produced for the information of those interested in animal welfare. It may be reproduced and distributed.

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