Ready for Animal Studies

The Ana G. Méndez University System (AGMUS) created an Animal Care and Use Program which complies with federal, state and local laws, standards and regulations, like: The Animal Welfare Regulations and Public Health Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). Any investigation to be performed involving the use of vertebrate animals for research or instructional purposes must be evaluated and approved by the AGMUS Animal and Care and Use Committee (ACUC). This approval must be obtained before any investigation takes place.

Some of the ACUC responsibilities are:

- The oversight of the animal's welfare through the review and approval of every live or dead animal use in teaching, investigation or biological tests.
- Ensure appropriate use, care and transportation of all laboratory animals in accordance with The Animal Welfare Act and applicable federal laws, guides and regulations.
- Determine if the animal species and numbers selected for the study are appropriate for the purpose and procedures proposed.
- Determine if an animal study takes into account all adequate procedures in order to minimize distress and pain in laboratory animals.
- Ensure that proposed life conditions are appropriate for species implicated in every research study.
- Annual and semianual inspections to animal facilities and evaluation of the Animal Care Program.

For more information on ACUC, please contact your Institutional Compliance Coordinator or the Office of Regulatory Compliance at (787) 751-0176 extensions, 7195, 7197 or access our website at http://compliance.suagm.edu

Public Health Services (PHS)

It is the Policy of the Public Health Service (PHS) to require institutions to establish and maintain proper measures to ensure the appropriate care and use of all animals involved in research, research training, and biological testing activities conducted or supported by the PHS. The PHS endorses the "U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training" developed by the Interagency Research Animal Committee. The Policy is intended to implement and supplement those Principles.

COMPLIANCE: The key for responsible research

compliance.suagm.edu

Vice Presidency for Planning and Academic Affairs
Associate Vice Presidency for Sponsored Programs
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) provides guidance and interpretation of the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, supports educational programs, and monitors compliance with the Policy by Assured institutions, such as ACGUS and PHS funding components to ensure the humane care and use of animals in PHS-supported research, testing, and training, thereby contributing to the quality of PHS-supported activities.

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals provides a framework for the judgments required in the management of animal facilities. It is a resource of proven value. It is widely accepted as a primary reference on animal care and use. The purpose of the Guide is to assist institutions in caring for and using animals in ways judged to be scientifically, technically, and humanely appropriate. It is also intended to assist investigators in fulfilling their obligation to plan and conduct animal experiments in accord with the highest scientific, humane, and ethical principles.

(Reference from the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, National Research Council, 2002, ix).

Tip of the Day: To implement the recommendations on the Guide, an Animal Care and Use Committee must be established to oversee and evaluate the programs.

"Compliance is Research's first step"
J.A. Vega

Replacement, Reduction, Refinement

Defined by two English biologists in 1959, William Russell and Rex Burch in their book "Principles on Humane Experimental Techniques", the principles of the three R's are embedded in legislation which governs the use of animals in science and research.

The three R's: replacement, reduction, and refinement outline the ethical research with animals and some of the ACUC protocol review criteria.

Replacement— The use of alternative methods to replace live animals in research.

Reduction— Use the minimum number of animals to obtain a valid conclusion.

Refinement— Decrease or elimination of any unnecessary pain or suffering.

Russell and Burch 1959 book on "The Principle of Humane Experimental Techniques"
ACUC Website

The Office of Regulatory Compliance created an ACUC website to maintain everyone informed and updated.

With the creation of the ACUC website, the Office of Regulatory Compliance wants to ensure that everyone is informed and updated with important information related to animal research. In the ACUC website you can access the ACUC Animal Care and Use Handbook, which contains important information on regulations, animal facilities and AGMUS “Policies. Also, you will find the ACUC forms including animal research presentation, research renewal application, among others.

Thanks to AGMUS commitment to ethical research, as mentioned earlier in this issue, the Office of Regulatory Compliance and ACUC have developed an Interactive Television Service (ITS) DVD that will be available for everyone via our website. Every workshop and training developed by the ACUC and the Office of Regulatory Compliance will also be available for everyone in the website including the information of CTTI Certification on animal research for everyone interested in obtaining the ACUC certification.

You can enter the ACUC website via the Office of Regulatory Compliance at: http://compliance.suagm.edu

Message from the ACUC Chair

Welcome to I-Care! The Ana G. Mendez University System (AGMUS) members of the Animal Care and Use Committee are pleased to offer you valuable information on the care and use of animals in the research activities at our Institutions (UNE, UMET and UT).

Now days the interest for the studies of our ecosystems is increasing rapidly. As members of the ecosystem, animals play an important role in maintaining the equilibrium of “Earth life”. For that, the importance of knowledge towards the environment, behavior and contribution to science from animals is increasing and the AGMUS scientists are encourage to make research studies island wide.

ACUC has the responsibility of keeping informed our faculty members, staff and students about federal legislations related with the care and use of animals in the investigation and teaching activities at AGMUS.

Welcome again to the I-Care Newsletter! Thank you for joining us. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us for more information or doubts about the Animal Welfare Act and other federal regulations applied to the care and use of animals in research activities.
Juan C. Musa, Ph.D. ACUC Chairperson.

For more information, please contact the Office of Regulatory Compliance at: (787) 751-0178 ext. 2195, 7197 or visit us at: http://compliance.suagm.edu

ACUC Composition

The Guide establishes ACUC membership requirements that must be fulfilled in order to comply with PHS Policy. Those requirements are as follows:

**Veterinarian:** Certified by the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ACLAM). Must have training or experience in laboratory animal science and medicine.

**Chair:** A knowledgeable and effective leader is crucial.

**Nonaffiliated member:** Represents the general community interests bringing a non-institutional perspective to the research endeavor.

**Scientist:** Practicing scientist experience in research involving animals

**Nonscientist:** Member whose primary concerns are in nonscientific areas (ethicist, clergy, among others). In order to comply with the PHS Policy, AGMUS Institutional Official (IO), Miriam Rivera, appointed an ACUC following the above membership requirements. Also the AGMUS ACUC composition have representation of all three AGMUS Institutions (Universidad del Este, Universidad Metropolitana, Universidad del Turabo).

"Research with animals is a privilege, not an obligation"