



National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee

12 August 2010

Update for AEC members from the Chair of NAEAC

This is the first in an occasional series of communications to keep AEC members up to date with NAEAC activities. Now that *NAEAC News* has been absorbed into *Welfare Pulse*, we thought a direct communication from NAEAC to AECs might cover issues that would not necessarily appear in *Welfare Pulse*. We will, of course, continue to cover issues on the use of animals in research, testing and teaching in that magazine as well.

- **NAEAC site visit** – NAEAC held its last meeting in Hawke's Bay where we visited the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) and Agrivet Services Ltd. Both these organisations have relatively recently constituted AECs, EIT having formerly been parented by another organisation. We found communication particularly useful in this situation given the relative lack of experience of AEC members, but were very impressed by the dedication with which the task was being approached. Every year NAEAC holds one of its meetings outside Wellington as a way of maintaining communication with AEC members.
- **Release of exotic birds** - NAEAC has been asked for an opinion on an issue raised by one AEC but probably common to others as well. This relates to the legal situation regarding the release of exotic wildlife species – birds in this case – into the wild following their capture and manipulation. The researcher in this case had planned to euthanase the birds because the Wildlife Act does technically prohibit release of exotic species. The AEC was clearly unhappy with the ethical implications of this requirement. NAEAC has sought an opinion from the legal team at the Department of Conservation on this matter and will keep AECs updated.
- **NAEAC Workshop for AECs** – A workshop will be held in Wellington on Friday 26 November. While you will receive more information about this as arrangements are finalised, our initial plans are to focus on ethical decision-making. Professor Donald Evans, Director of Otago University's Bioethics Centre will be a keynote speaker, and we will have an open forum where various hypothetical (but reality-based) protocols will be discussed. There will also be a series of break-out mini-tutorials on a range of issues including those suggested following the previous workshop.
- **AEC Induction Pack** – The induction pack for new AEC members has recently been reviewed and an updated list of contents and documents is now available on the MAFBNZ website (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regqs/animal-welfare/nz/naeac/new-ace-members-info>). You can also obtain packs by contacting the NAEAC Secretariat. We encourage AECs to supply these packs as part of the initiation of members into the AEC environment.
- **NAEAC's Role** – Part of NAEAC's role is to give advice to AECs. We encourage members to contact us with any queries as well as any comments or feedback.

Regards

Virginia Williams
Chair