

8 November 2013

## Update for AEC members from the Chair of NAEAC – November 2013

### Submission on the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill

For your information, NAEAC's submission to the Primary Production Select Committee on the draft Animal Welfare Amendment Bill is attached.

### Codes of Ethical Conduct

While in general, NAEAC was pleased with the quality of the codes of ethical conduct reviewed at our October meeting, a number of issues did arise for which the committee required clarification or alteration:

1. **Adverse incidents.** It is NAEAC's view that adverse incidents occurring under approved protocols should be reported to the AEC **at the time**, not in the end of study report. AEC members may feel that such an incident may require a change to the protocol or some other action to prevent another such incident. Attached is an example reporting form.
2. **Emergency management.** A NAEAC member queried if it was the responsibility of the code holder or AEC to establish appropriate protocols or procedures for the welfare of laboratory animals during emergencies and whether such plans should be referenced in codes of ethical conduct. While every institution should have a disaster/emergency management plan, AECs, within their function of monitoring animal facilities, should be ensuring that such protocols and procedures are in place.
3. **Decision-making.** While consensus remains the most common method of decision-making in AECs, we have seen an increase in the number of committees using majority voting. NAEAC strongly recommends consensus, with modifications being made until all members are satisfied. However, if committees do choose to use a majority vote, it is extremely important to the integrity of the AEC system that any majority includes at least two of the statutory external members. It has been a common criticism of our AEC system that the input of external members can be overridden by internal members, where the latter outnumber the former. We have always claimed that the presence of the external members prevents this, but unless decisions are made by consensus, or a majority decision includes a majority of the statutory external members, the criticism is valid – and unacceptable.
4. **External members.** A number of AECs include non-institutional members as well as and apart from those who have been nominated under s101 of the Act. While NAEAC applauds the involvement of these extra external members, we do not see them as replacing the statutorily required external members in terms of quorum, subcommittee and decision-making processes.



5. **Parenting.** A note that if an AEC wishes to "parent" another organisation in terms of providing ethical review of their protocols, such an arrangement must **firstly** be notified to the Ministry for Primary Industries.
6. **Meetings other than face-to-face.** While NAEAC would prefer that, for maximising the quality of discussion and decision-making, AECs meet in person, we understand that there are occasions when for a variety of reasons this is not possible or practical. However, we see discussion as integral to decision-making, something that is negated in email decision, and difficult to manage in teleconferences, and their use should be limited. The possibility of videoconferencing has been raised by one institution. Provided all members have access to facilities that enable them to see the other members, this should allow for good discussion. See also NAEAC guidelines on teleconferencing (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/pubs/naeac/naeac-guidelines-teleconferencing-to-assess-protocols.pdf>)
7. **Monitoring.** While monitoring of compliance with protocols and of animal facilities is an important part of an AEC's function, because of the many different types of institutions using animals in science, the methods used to do this are left to the individual establishments. However, this is an area that does raise concerns at times and NAEAC suggests a re-read of the NAEAC guidelines on adequate monitoring (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/pubs/naeac/naeac-guidelines-for-aecs-on-adequate-monitoring.pdf>) NAEAC does not for instance find it adequate to simply state that AEC members may carry out inspections at any time. Monitoring policies should be specific e.g. number of visits per year, which sites will be visited, new manipulations to be visited etc.
8. **Grading.** AECs are again referred to the booklet *Animal Use Statistics* (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/pubs/naeac/2010-animal-use-statistics-web.pdf>) for guidance on the appropriate grading of manipulations.
9. **Guidelines.** Apart from those mentioned above, NAEAC also has guidelines on:
  - a. Avoiding needless duplication of animal use in research
  - b. Application templates used by AECs
  - c. Site visitsSee <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regs/animal-welfare/pubs/animals-used-in-research#3>

### AEC workshop

NAEAC will again hold a workshop for AEC members, researchers and animal carers towards the end of 2014. While planning is already underway for this, we are happy to receive any suggestions on topics for inclusion. Clearly, in one day we have limited time, but will certainly consider requests.

### Query re tail-tipping

We have again received a query about whether tail-tipping and ear punching in breeding colonies constitutes a manipulation. In a previous newsletter, NAEAC responded as follows:

*NAEAC is of the opinion that tissue sampling for the purpose of targeted breeding has become so common as to be considered a husbandry procedure necessary for the management of breeding colonies and therefore normal practice. However, it would be*



*appropriate for AECs to require this to be done under a Standard Operating Procedure with appropriate regard to the welfare of the animals. In addition to the above, given that this is management rather than research, we believe there should be veterinary oversight and management of anaesthesia - because this is not research, the exemption that allows research staff to use restricted vet medicines would not apply.*

A reminder, however, that any biopsy to answer a specific research question (outside of the information required to breed) does constitute a manipulation and therefore requires AEC approval.

#### **Euthanasia**

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines for Euthanasia have been updated, with the 2013 edition available at

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf>

#### **Use of thermography as a measure of welfare**

A publication on infrared thermography as a measure of welfare includes chapters on its use in laboratory animals is available at:

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/animalwelfare/92.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/animalwelfare/92.pdf)

#### **NAEAC Induction Packs for new AEC members**

NAEAC reviews the content of the AEC new member induction pack on an annual basis.

AECs are reminded to contact MPI directly for an up to date version of this pack for any new members joining their committee. Requests can be made directly to the NAEAC secretary,

Paula Lemow at: [paula.lemow@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:paula.lemow@mpi.govt.nz) or [NAEAC@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:NAEAC@mpi.govt.nz)

Kind Regards



Virginia Williams  
NAEAC Chair