

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Research animal well-being

This volume contains the published proceedings of a conference held in late 1991 on institutional compliance with USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) regulations for the well-being of canines and non-human primates in research. The regulations have been criticized and were the subject of legal proceedings even before they were implemented. In February 1993, Judge Richey ruled that the sections concerning dogs and non-human primates were unlawful. So this is a publication that is, not only specific to the United States legal requirements but also, has to some extent been overtaken by events. Some of the papers review the available literature to support their theses, while others are reports of management practices at various institutions. After each paper there are transcripts of question and answer sessions which often suffer from a lack of structure and style. The first half of the book considers dogs, and in this section the emphasis is on the USDA requirements for space and exercise. These are important matters, particularly when the legislation only requires that the cage should be the square of the dog's length plus six inches! Having said that, in the introductory paper Wolfe points out, quite correctly, that far more is known about the social needs of dogs, and that these seem to be more important than small differences in cage or pen size.

The second half of the book primarily addresses the USDA requirement that primate caging and husbandry should provide for the animals' social needs and promote their psychological well-being. The first papers discuss the requirements but also include a contribution which considers the problem of zoonoses, particularly B-virus, as the risk of infection may be greater when enrichment results in increased handling by the staff. The USDA rules have resulted in an explosion of research into various primate enrichment strategies, some of which are reported or discussed here. Conference proceedings are often like the curate's egg, and this one is no exception. After the judge's decision, some of the papers may be of limited value even within the United States. However, if animal house managers wish to draw on others' experiences, this may be a good place to start.

Implementation Strategies for Research Animal Well-Being: Institutional compliance with regulations. Proceedings of a conference held by Scientists Center for Animal Welfare (SCAW) and Working with Animals used in Research, Drugs and Surgery (WARDS). Edited by Lee Krulisch (1992). SCAW: Bethesda. 178pp. Obtainable from SCAW, 4805 St Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814, USA. Price US\$20 plus US\$5 for postage abroad.

Refinement alternatives

In November 1991 the UC Center for Animal Alternatives was established within the nine campuses of the University of California. It is sited at the School of Veterinary Medicine on the Davis campus and is headed by Dr Lynette Hart. The stated aim of the Center for Animal Alternatives (CAA) is to build on the concept of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) of Russell and Burch but, as replacement and reduction are being widely tackled in several other places, to concentrate on refinement factors which may affect the well-being of the animals being used by man.