

AAALAC SITE VISIT 2008: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE

The Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, International (AAALAC, Intl.) will conduct its regular triennial site visit to the University of Michigan on **MARCH 10-MARCH 14, 2008**.

The site visitors have been provided with a written description of the UM animal care and use program and facilities. During their visit they will tour all animal housing areas, animal surgery areas, and support spaces. As they evaluate the UM program description, inspect the facilities, and interview members of the UM animal care and use community, the site visitors will be trying to answer some of the following questions:

- Is the University in compliance with all federal laws and regulations, and the standards outlined in the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*?
- Have problems identified during previous site visits or federal inspections been addressed and corrected?
- Is the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA) effective?
- Are animal husbandry, veterinary care, animal surgery, and euthanasia performed in accordance with federal regulations and nationally accepted standards?
- Are the physical facilities (including caging, rooms, buildings, ventilation systems, etc.) designed and maintained in accordance with federal regulations and nationally accepted standards?

TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE

Keep the following tips in mind as you prepare for the site visit:

- **Know the site visit details: 3/10/08 — 3/14/08.** A detailed itinerary will be provided to facility managers in advance, and will also be available to others upon request from the UCUCA Office (ucuca.office@umich.edu).
- **Bring ALL research and husbandry staff members up to speed on animal care and use, including students and temporary laboratory members.** Anyone who works with animals should be acquainted with the basics of animal care and use (occupational health and safety, how to contact a veterinarian, UCUCA approval of animal use procedures, etc.). Use the information in this newsletter to conduct a review session with all members of your laboratory or facility staff.
- **Be familiar with the UCUCA-approved protocol for your animal use project.** Every research staff member using animals should be familiar with the UCUCA-approved protocol for their projects, and ensure that the animals are used accordingly. Expect the AAALAC, Intl. site visitors to compare actual experimental activities conducted with those described in the UCUCA-approved protocol. The UCUCA-approved protocol for each project is available from the principal investigator.
- **Answer questions in an honest and forthright manner -- and STOP.** If you must chat, use this opportunity to network by asking the site visitors about their home institutions, or discuss the scientific background of the research project. Don't hesitate to answer a question "I don't know" if that's the case (you could add that you'd call ULAM or UCUCA to find out!).
- **Insist that the site visitors adhere to all entry requirements and restrictions for your area, such as protective clothing, traffic patterns, light schedules, etc.** For special clothing requirements, facility managers should be prepared to supply clothing and/or other protective gear for at least six people (2-3 site visitors, 2-3 facility representatives).

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

You can use the following checklist as a guide in preparing your area for the site visit. For more information on any of the policies or guidelines, please reference the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* or see the UCUCA website (www.ucuca.umich.edu).

LABELS

- Check that all animals are properly identified** with species, strain/stock/breed, source, PI, pertinent dates (birth, arrival, capture, etc.), and current UCUCA approval number. Dogs and cats are required to have a neck tag or tattoo, and monkeys are usually tattooed.
- Check that containers of all solutions and dry goods are properly labeled** to prevent accidental misuse or injury.
- Check that all hazard labels are current and prominently posted.** Take down obsolete hazard signs.
- PROPERLY DISPOSE OF ALL EXPIRED ITEMS --** drugs, treatments, fluids, foods, etc., on or before the expiration date.

HUSBANDRY

- Ensure that all feed is fresh** (within 6 months of labeled mill date for most species) and appropriate for the species.
- Check that all animal caging is cleaned and sanitized on an appropriate schedule.** See the *Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* for specific information on sanitation requirements.
- Ensure that all animals are clean and dry.** Cages should be changed if the bedding appears wet or overly soiled.

VETERINARY CARE

- All ill or injured animals MUST be reported to the ULAM veterinary staff.** Remind everyone who uses your facility. Information on obtaining veterinary care can be obtained from ULAM and UCUCA and should be prominently posted.

MICRO AND MACRO ANIMAL ENVIRONMENT

- Check that animals are provided with adequate housing space, particularly cages with litters of rodents.** See the *Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* for specific information on space requirements.
- Check that all caging is in good repair and of appropriate design for the animals housed.** No sharp edges, rust, cracks, or ways for the animals to escape.
- Check animal room temperature.** It should be stable (varying not more than a couple of degrees each day) and appropriate for the animals housed. Make sure that minimum-maximum thermometers are reset daily.
- Check animal room ventilation.** Make sure the room is not stuffy or malodorous, and that the room air pressure is flowing in the right direction (i.e., hallway air should flow out of an SPF rodent room, etc.).
- Check light timers.** Don't just spin the knob, make sure the lights really go off at night by staying late or coming in early once every six months.

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

- Check all washers and sterilizers.** Don't depend on the machine's settings and read-outs. Use independent indicators (strips, vials, etc.) to ensure that your equipment is working properly. Make sure that your sanitation equipment logs are up to date and available for review.
- Check that moisture-proof outlet/switch covers or ground-fault interrupters (GFI) are installed** to protect you from electrical shock hazard in your area.
- Check your security system.** Make sure your animal room doors are locked.
- Check that all surfaces in your animal housing rooms are in good repair,** vermin-proof (no holes or gaps), and sanitizable (non-porous).
- Check your animal room housekeeping.** Clean all hard-to-reach spots. Get rid of anything that is not absolutely necessary for daily animal care or use.
- Vermin problems?** Notify the pest control specialists in the Plant Department.

STORAGE

- Check that storage of food, bedding, caging etc., is separated** from storage of chemicals, cleaners, or other hazardous agents. Food and bedding must be stored off the floor and away from the wall. Opened (or torn) bags of food or bedding must be stored in a vermin-proof, leak-proof container with a tightly fitting lid.
- Check that any substances that may be toxic to animals,** but required for animal husbandry or use (cleaners, experimental agents, etc.), are stored in a cabinet or other secondary container to ensure that animals cannot come into contact with hazardous substances.
- Ensure that animal carcasses are stored in dedicated refrigerators/freezers.** The carcasses should be double-bagged using opaque bags.
- All trash receptacles must be leak proof, have tightly fitting lids, and must be emptied regularly.** There should be adequate numbers of properly labeled waste receptacles placed throughout the facility.
- ENSURE THAT ALL CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ARE SECURED** in a double-locked, substantially-constructed cabinet.

PERSONNEL

- Check that all personnel who work with animals are listed on the protocol and are properly trained.** Remind everyone that training is mandatory and is provided by the UCUCA Office staff. Descriptions of the training classes, as well as schedules and registration information, are available on the UCUCA website, www.ucuca.umich.edu.
- Eating, drinking, smoking, or applying cosmetics is not allowed in animal facilities.** Remind everyone who uses your facility.
- Check that the disaster plan and emergency contact information** (nights, weekends, etc.) are updated and prominently posted in each facility.

If you encounter the site visitors during their rounds on 3/10/08 — 3/14/08, please feel free to welcome them and respond to their questions to the best of your knowledge. Relax; be friendly; and convey your enthusiasm, pride, and sense of tremendous responsibility toward ensuring ethical and humane care and use of animals!

Questions and concerns regarding the AAALAC, Intl. site visit can be addressed to the UCUCA Office, 018 ARF 5614, Ph: (734) 763-8028, Fax: (734) 936-3234, e-mail: ucuca.office@umich.edu.

The UM has been AAALAC, Intl. accredited since 1971, and is one of the top notch animal care and use programs in the country.

With your cooperation, we anticipate a successful accreditation site visit!