



To: Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution
Re: Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Annual Meeting (Oct. 3-4, 2009)
Date: October 13, 2009

I am writing to report on the CCAC meeting, held Oct 3-4, 2009 in Ottawa. The CSEE is a limited-term member, and I have been appointed the CSEE representative. The CCAC is the “national peer review organization responsible for setting and maintaining standards for care and ethical use of animals in research, teaching, and testing in Canada.” Many members of the CSEE use vertebrates in their research, and thus interact with the CCAC and local Animal Care Committees. Participation by the CSEE in the CCAC is thus of particular importance. I received several comments from CCAC members that indicated that they were appreciative of CSEE’s participation.

The structure of the meeting was such that the first day was dedicated to the Standing Committees (essentially sub-committees that deal with specific matters – they include Finance and Planning, Guidelines, Three Rs), of which I have been assigned to the Assessment Committee. This committee deals with the assessments of the institutions using animals in research or teaching that subscribe to the CCAC program. These institutions include universities, federal government agencies and private institutions. The second day was composed of a morning meeting of the entire Council (approx. 30 members). The meeting had an agenda which included an open forum for members to pose questions and raise issues to the CCAC Executive and Secretariat.

I am limited by issues of confidentiality and can not divulge too many specifics of the meeting. The CCAC is developing documents related to its 5 year plan and other issues, which it labels as confidential. These documents cannot be distributed or discussed beyond CCAC council until they are publicly released. I can, however, disclose several issues that were discussed that may be of interest to our membership.

1. During the Assessment Committee meeting, I learned that there will be a document that will outline how University Veterinarians should engage in continuing education. The point was made that many University Veterinarians do not have experience with lab animals, especially at small institutions, and that the CCAC should support their professional development. I raised the point that the many (most) University Veterinarians do not have experience with wildlife and other non-traditional animal models. I was told that wildlife/non-traditional models usually make a small proportion of the total number of animal use protocols, and it is typically not feasible for Universities to spend funds on training for their Veterinarians. Nonetheless, the members of the committee were sensitive to my point, and suggested that University Veterinarians should be consulting with outside experts in situations where they do not have expertise. In addition, it was suggested *that researchers should provide video, pictures and equipment to animal care committees to answer any questions that these committees may have.* This theme was repeated in private conversations I had with other representatives. Those of us working with wildlife and other non-traditional animal models need to educate our local animal

care committee and University Veterinarian to facilitate our research. It is clear from discussions I have had with CSEE members that conflict with the local animal care committee over best practices with their species can be a major impediment. Does the council wish me to continue to push this issue with the CCAC? I have the “ear” of some of the CCAC secretariat, and can continue to push this issue along.

2. There will be a joint statement regarding scientific merit from the Tri-Council and the CCAC. Scientific merit is required for all animal use protocols, and typically this is automatic for projects funded by NSERC or other Tri-council funds. Unfunded research right now must have their animal use protocols reviewed for scientific merit by independent reviewers.

3. The CCAC is attempting to have most/all federal government agencies subscribe to the CCAC program. This may have implications for some of our members. There were also discussions of having provincial agencies do the same (eg. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and other provincial equivalents).

4. There are some issues related to controlled drugs and the access that researchers have to these drugs. The CCAC is concerned that researchers in a laboratory setting are not able to get timely access to analgesics, anesthetics and drugs for euthanasia because of delays in obtaining permits. The CCAC is considering lobbying Health Canada to alter the legislation governing controlled substances to facilitate access to these drugs by researchers. It is unclear how this might affect our members, but those members using anaesthetics and analgesics in the field may want to be aware of this and prepare for changes.

If any members of CSEE council or individual members of CSEE have any questions about CCAC issues, please contact me at aschulte@laurentian.ca



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