

CMAR Program To Celebrate 10th Anniversary

The Certified Manager of Animal Resources (CMAR) program is about to begin its' 10th anniversary year, after finishing 2009 with a successful marketing campaign at the Atlanta National Meeting. The CMAR booth attracted a lot of attention from technicians wanting to learn about the certification process, managers interested in getting their staff and themselves certified, and veterinarians considering certification to improve their management skills.

On Tuesday of the meeting, there was a panel discussion titled "Management Training Opportunities within the Laboratory Animal Community." Tracy Lewis, BS, MBA, LATG, CMAR and co-chair of the CMAR committee discussed the opportunities with CMAR. On Wednesday, there was a full-day workshop for preparation for the Animal Resources portion of the CMAR exam. It was attended by 34 people. Of those 34 people, 10 took the AR exam on Thursday morning and 100% passed the AR portion of the exam. As of Nov. 1st, there are now 328 CMAR certified individuals!

What these potential CMARs realize is that now, more than ever, certification is a means to differentiate one's self from others. The competition for quality jobs is increasing as our industry feels the pains of a slow global economy. While there are many ways for members of the lab animal science community to do this, CMAR offers a unique balance of mainstream management training along with specialized industry training. It is also the only certification within our industry that is portable; certified Manager" has been a recognized certification since 1974, with more than 10,000 CMs worldwide.

In the coming year the CMAR committee has set the following goals

- provide training opportunities for all four CMAR exams (MSI, MSII, MSIII, AR)
- transition the AR exam to an online format
- review and update training materials and AR exam questions
- maintain communication and encourage CMAR candidates
- work with ILAM and LAMA to evaluate CMAR training around the ILAM program dates

To learn more about the CMAR program, or to sign up, visit <http://www.aalas.org/cmar>.

How Completing the CMAR Helped Me Grow Professionally

By Sherri Goss, CMAR, RVT, BA

I have been working in laboratory animal science since 1991. I started my career at UCSF after I graduated from an RVT program and received my license. Over the next 5 years, I took and passed the three AALAS technician exams. After completing the LATG exam and having 5 years of experience working in a research facility, I felt integrated into the laboratory animal science community and knowledgeable about laboratory animals. It was clear to me that I would remain in this field until I retire. I moved from UCSF to UCLA and am currently at UCD.

My position changed over the next few years from animal health technician to training coordinator. In this new role I was working directly with a more diverse population since all people working with laboratory animals must be trained. My

expertise needed some refinement and expansion. Thus far my education and certification had focused on the animal's well being and the regulations that dictate the standards we must follow to achieve this. I did not have a clear understanding of how to work with all of the stake holders in a laboratory animal setting because my knowledge was specific to animal care and technical techniques. I started attending AALAS National Meetings and the biennial LAWTE conferences to learn new skills for being a more effective trainer.

During one of the LAWTE meetings I was introduced to CMAR for the first time. I attended an informational session where I learned the criteria for taking the exams, the content of the exams, and the fees associated with completing the four exams. We were informed that only about 200 people were certified at the time. I was quite impressed with the level of detail one would have to know about laws and regulations, biosafety, budget analysis, rate setting and per diems, and facilities to be able to pass the exams. These tests encompassed all aspects of creating and maintaining a successful animal facility. What seemed most relevant to me at the time about the test preparation that I would be able to apply directly to my role as training coordinator were the sections on training, leading, and controlling and motivating staff. I became a more effective trainer as I prepared for the exams because I learned new strategies for communicating with people and better ways of resolving conflict.

I have many opportunities to use the tools I learned by becoming CMAR certified. In my current role I work with facility managers to create standard operating procedures for maintaining animals in the many facilities we have on campus. The knowledge I learned through my CMAR preparation has helped me to better understand facility manager's dilemma of having to adhere to federal, state, and university policies in a time of economic crisis, leaving limited resources to support facility and program upgrades. Our office is charged with enforcing regulations by auditing facilities and laboratories for compliance. Being CMAR certified has enabled me to empathize with animal technicians, facility managers, veterinary staff, research support staff, and principal investigators at a new level. I use my experiences with staff during audits as an opportunity to support the overall mission of animal research. I work with people to find out what improvements need to be made in their facility or laboratory and help support initiating changes by priority through education and training. Passing CMAR expanded my knowledge base to include details about facility design, rate setting, staffing, budgeting, training, the role of the attending veterinarian, the role of the IACUC, funding agencies, the Animal Welfare Act, and Public Health Service Policy.

Currently at UCD there are three of us who are CMAR certified. We are encouraging all of our facility managers to become CMAR certified so they too will expand their knowledge base and work more effectively with other stake holders in laboratory animal science.