

Infrastructural Support for Animal-Based Research

Background

The infrastructural needs of animal-based research in the new millennium will differ significantly from those of prior decades. Laboratory animal science/medicine benefited from new diagnostic tests and great improvements in the microbiological quality of laboratory animals. The last decade has challenged biomedical science to produce, house and care for high quality animals, the populations of which are increasing by at least 20 percent per year through the advances and promise of animal-related biotechnology. This task will continue to be compounded by the enhanced intrinsic value of genetically altered rodents, the research subjects currently experiencing the most rapidly growing use. AALAS believes that the evolving and sophisticated use of novel animals must be complemented by new strategies and support in the design, development and delivery of animal-related infrastructure to meet the needs of biomedical research.

Issues

- Physical, personnel and financial resources essential for animal-related infrastructure have not kept pace with scientific needs and trends.
- The cost of animal-related infrastructure is a major burden for scientists and biomedical research centers.
- Rapid scientific change and continuing regulatory

uncertainty complicate effective channeling of limited infrastructural resources.

- Changing scientific needs, increasing populations of novel animals, and new housing, husbandry and health care systems have created a deficiency in the availability of highly qualified laboratory animal scientists and technologists.
- Research scientists must become more knowledgeable about the operational and physical infrastructure required to protect the integrity of their models.
- Personnel who work with laboratory animals incur health risks from allergens, zoonoses and ergonomic injuries.

Positions

- Regional collaborations should be developed to improve access to cost-effective facilities and programs in support of animal-related research.
- Improved federal planning and funding should catalyze the future development of animal-related infrastructure.
- Institutions should share financial and programmatic responsibility for developing and maintaining animal-related infrastructure.
- Training in the care and use of laboratory animals should be facilitated among scientists and technologists destined to be providers or users of animal-related infrastructure.
- Training and monitoring for occupational health and safety should be stressed for providers and users of animal care services.