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## Division of Animal Resources

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Dear DAR Colleague:

Looking back over the 9 years I have had the privilege of leading the DAR, I have to admit that fiscal year 2010-2011 has been our "toughest" one yet. We have been long on work and short on people and have not lacked for gremlins gumming up the works in the way of substantial complications related to the IACUC and Project Compass. We knew last year that the complexity of research support demands and the usage of most of our facilities were approaching limits and that remains true. As I look to the future, I cannot help but believe that the coming year will bring the greatest challenges ever. For one thing, as predicted last year, we now appear to be in a cooling-off period characterized by census decline and over, for a while at least, the many years of relentless mouse census expansion. We are going to have to adapt to the novelty of a shrinking census and diminished income. On one hand, this will provide the benefit of better aligning the amount of work with our currently over-extended husbandry manpower, but on the other our historically somewhat free-spending ways in terms of acquiring equipment and technology invariably must be reigned-in. The next 12 months will require us to concentrate on standard operating procedures; contain costs; address aged, failing HVAC in several facilities; know and apply the requirements of the newly-issued 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals"; and meet many other obligations. I am confident that we will achieve just as we delivered great accomplishments this year, a few of which were "knocking it out of the ballpark" on our most complex and difficult AAALAC site visit ever; rescuing the IACUC and the electronic protocol review system; supporting 2 national meetings held locally; fully deploying the composting program; excelling through a snow emergency; reducing mouse cage lid entrapment deaths; launching the mouse sperm-cryo rederivation program; and containing the spread of fur mites. I am optimistic that we have the best people and in adequate numbers on the administrative staff and among the veterinary technicians, but I remain apprehensive with respect to the chronic shortages of personnel we experience particularly in animal care, its effect upon the excellence of our services and, just as importantly, the quality of the lives away from work for those of you in animal care. We are concentrating on recruiting and hiring and are casting our net nationally, but, even in a recession, the numbers are not there for us. We will be granted some relief, as I have shared already, with a dip in the census and we will be adding 15 mouse auto-water racks in October and another 11 early in 2012 that will also help relieve labor demands.

More than achieving big goals or realizing amazing successes, this past year has been characterized foremost by exceptional team work and by valiant, heroic, selfless and dedicated effort across the DAR. There is little that can give me greater satisfaction than to be able to count upon the altruism, professionalism, and devotion of "The Team". As we go forward, the challenges and, indeed, the difficulties will be greater than ever for us. As a notable leader, Winston Churchill (the British Prime Minister during World War II) once observed: "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". While I know we will be presented with difficulties, I am confident that together we will exploit them and achieve even loftier heights in the support of our scientists, in the care of their animals, in our participation in various ways in their experiments, and in providing for the health and wellbeing of people everywhere.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Huerkamp, D.V.M., DACLAM  
Director, Division of Animal Resources

**DAR**

**We are competent. We care. We can be trusted.**



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