Policy on Annual Facility Tours

From the CCAC’s Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees* (2006)

The ACC should regularly visit animal care facilities and areas in which animals are used, in order to better understand the work being conducted within the institution, to meet with those working in the animal facilities and animal use areas and to discuss their needs, to monitor animal based work according to approved protocols and SOP’s, to assess any weaknesses in the facilities (ageing facilities, overcrowding, insufficient staffing and any other concerns) and to forward any recommendations or commendations to the person(s) responsible for the facilities and for animal use.

Visits of the animal facilities should be conducted at least once a year, and should be documented through the ACC minutes or written reports. Those responsible for the animal facilities should respond to any ACC recommendations in writing, and site visit reports should always be followed up on jointly by the senior administration and the ACC.

To evaluate facilities where animals are housed and/or used and to encourage open communication with the University Animal Care Committee (UACC), all animal facilities are toured annually. All members of the UACC are encouraged to participate in at least one facility tour per year. Each facility is toured once annually with more frequent tours occurring if warranted.

Tours are organized and conducted in conjunction with the facility manager and/or delegated staff. Tours provide a visual of the areas where animals are housed ensuring that all important criteria are being met; clarifying that the equipment and human resources are appropriate and sufficient; and helping to place the use of the facility into context.

Areas of particular interest include but are not limited to food, drug and equipment storage; food and drug labelling; cage/facility cleanliness; environmental parameters (temperature/humidity/air quality); animal/cage identification; animal condition/health; environmental enrichment; appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); security; availability of information (SOPs, emergency contacts etc.) and improvements made since the last tour or planned for the future.

Following every facility tour, a formal report is generated for UACC review and eventual distribution to the facility manager and all relevant staff/users. Responses to recommendations or comments are required and followed up on. The senior administrator responsible for animal care receives a copy of all reports.