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Evolution of the transgenic core

The times they are a-changin' for genetically engineered mice and the facilities that maintain them. Core facilities are expanding beyond their original conception as producers of transgenic mice to encompass a wide range of services, including research animal maintenance. Mark and colleagues describe the logistics and administration of the newly dubbed Mouse Genetics Core Facility at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center as a blueprint for other institutions seeking to expand and update their own transgenic cores for research in the twenty-first century. [See page 27](#)

One take on technician training

Experience has proven that comprehensive training and education make it easier to attract and retain highly qualified animal care technicians, as well as to ensure that research facilities reach maximum performance. Romick and coauthors outline a multidisciplinary, performance-based approach to training with a description of the subject matter covered in SoBran's initial orientation period and ongoing training sessions. The authors also address record keeping methods and training program assessment. [See page 35](#)

Otitis media: the subtle scourge of rats

The rat is commonly employed as a model for studying the structure, function, and pathology of the ear, but spontaneous ear infections can confound the results of experimental procedures—wasting time, money, and animals. Verdaguer *et al.* present a study on the incidence of spontaneous otitis media in Wistar rats. They compare disease incidence in animals housed in standard cages with those housed in barrier units, showing that 20% of their conventionally housed animals developed spontaneous otitis media, whereas only 5% of their animals housed in isolated units were infected. Their results underscore the importance of strict control of the shipping, housing conditions, and manipulation of animals to be used in otological research. [See page 40](#)

