

should check that all documentation was completed, reinforcing compliance and a team culture of caring.

Closing the loop on better documentation procedures and IACUC program evaluations of the veterinary technicians' skills and qualifications will ensure complete transparency and prevent future citations from the USDA inspector.

*Edgar is a Specialist at RHI, Inc., Lebanon, NH.*

**RESPONSE**

**Document IACUC review**

**Steven T. Shipley, DVM, DACLAM**

The USDA inspector overstepped the intent (and the letter) of the Animal Welfare Act regulations (AWARs)<sup>1</sup> in issuing the citation for violation of §2.32.a. Great Eastern has a written, IACUC-approved policy in place stating that the technician supervisor has the authority to apply his or her professional judgment in assigning technicians to work with investigators. This policy clearly satisfies the requirement for the institution to "...ensure that all...personnel involved in animal care, treatment, and use are qualified to perform their duties." The supervisor's judgment was backed up with documentation of each technician's qualifications in his or her training files. I presume that these training files were made available to the USDA inspector during the inspection. Because Great Eastern's policy and training files clearly satisfy §2.32.a of the AWARs, this citation is wholly without merit.

There is some (weak) justification to cite Great Eastern for violation of §2.32.b of the AWARs. This section states that that "...the qualifications of personnel (shall be) reviewed with sufficient frequency to fulfill the research facility's responsibilities under this section and Sec. 2.31." §2.31 details IACUC responsibilities, including the requirement for regular review. It is with respect to this requirement for regular review that Great Eastern may be vulnerable to criticism. Great Eastern does not seem to have a mechanism in place for regular review and oversight of the decision-making of the technician

**A word from USDA**

*In response to the questions posed in this scenario, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Care (USDA, APHIS, AC) offers the following guidance:*

An appeals process exists for use in the event an institution does not agree with a citation issued by an inspector. In general, there is a 21-day holding period before an inspection report is made available to the public online through the Animal Care Inspection System database (<http://acisearch.aphis.usda.gov/LPASearch/faces/CustomerSearch.jspx>). During this time, an institution can appeal a citation or request redaction of sensitive information. An institution may also appeal a citation after the report is posted.

The appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the regional office; it is then forwarded to the supervisor of the inspector, the Supervisory Animal Care Specialist (SACS). In the event that an institution is not satisfied with the response from the SACS, a second appeal can be sent to the Regional Director. If an institution wishes to appeal further, the Regional Director will confer with the Deputy Administrator of APHIS, AC.

Inspection reports under appeal will not be posted online until the entire appeals process is completed. Once the process is completed, an amended inspection report will be issued or the findings of the original inspection report will be affirmed. If after 30 days the institution does not make an additional appeal to the Regional Director, either the amended or the original inspection report will be posted online.

A complete description of the appeals process is available online ([http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_welfare/2012/appeals\\_process.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_welfare/2012/appeals_process.pdf)).

**Chester Gipson, DVM**

*Deputy Administrator  
USDA, APHIS, AC*

supervisor and the qualifications of the technicians. Although the IACUC is fulfilling the intent of §2.32.b, it may be falling a bit short on conforming to the letter of the regulation. Although this citation is technically defensible, the fact that it was issued for this type of technicality may indicate some underlying friction in the relationship between Great Eastern and the USDA inspector.

Two simple steps could be taken to satisfy the concerns raised by the USDA inspector and to minimize the likelihood of recurrence of this type of citation. These steps would also show the USDA inspector that his or her concerns are taken seriously and fully addressed by the institution. First, the technician supervisor should create and regularly maintain a summary document for each technician indicating the species with which he or she is approved and trained to work with. Second, this document and the training files for each technician should be reviewed by the IACUC as part of its semi-annual program review. This way the IACUC

will specifically approve each technician for each species twice yearly based on its review of the technician's training and qualifications.

These two simple actions should fully conform to the AWARs and satisfy the USDA inspector that there is robust, active, regular oversight of this activity by the IACUC.

1. Animal Welfare Act and Regulations. 9 CFR, Chapter 1, Subchapter A.

*Shipley is Chief of Veterinary Medicine in the Comparative Medicine Program at University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD.*

**RESPONSE**

**One extra step**

**Casey Brinsfield, MPH**

The Animal Welfare Act regulations (AWARs)<sup>1</sup> state, "It shall be the responsibility of the research facility