

The best outcome would be for this matter to be resolved within the framework of the existing policies while achieving the objectives of the researcher. Perhaps disposable cages could be set up for the study in a space outside the barrier facility served by the quarantine. Because the experimental time is short, another option might be to carry out the study off-site at a local institution or contract research organization that could accommodate the animals without requiring quarantine. Engaging in such a collaborative dialog would show empathy towards Church and provide the IO an opportunity to find a solution working within institutional policy. In the absence of such an alternative, the appropriate position for the veterinarian and the IACUC is to stand by their decision and expect institutional support.

1. Institute for Laboratory Animal Research. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* 8th edn. (National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2011).

Fallon is Chief Operating Officer, Innovive, Inc., San Diego, CA, and Boston, MA.

RESPONSE

Stick to their guns

Melinda Hollander, BS, CPIA

This scenario has two issues that need to be addressed: the request from Church to forgo quarantine procedures and the attempt by the Institutional Official (IO) to inappropriately influence the IACUC.

Great Eastern University has a preventative medicine program that includes a quarantine period for incoming animals, suggesting that the University strives for separation of animals on the basis of health status. These actions are commendable as they assure the health of animals in the facility. Church is acquiring a number of transgenic rats from a colleague but does not want to follow the quarantine policy for these animals, offering three arguments to justify his unwillingness to comply with the quarantine.

First, he asserts that the sending institution is a highly regarded research university that is fully accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory

Animal Care International (AAALAC). But AAALAC accreditation does not guarantee that animals are pathogen-free. The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (the *Guide*)<sup>1</sup> explicitly warns that “subclinical microbial infections such as norovirus, parvovirus, and Helicobacter can occur in pathogen-free housed rodents if the microbial barrier is breached.” Regardless of the accreditation status of both institutions, precautions should be taken with animals that are transported from one institution to another in order to protect the health of the receiving institution’s colony.

Second, Church points out that his experiments would be completed in less time than the quarantine period. But the time difference between the duration of Church’s experiments and the duration of the quarantine period seems to be a matter of convenience rather than scientific necessity and should not be a consideration when making decisions about the handling of imported animals.

Finally, Church argues that *per diem* rates for the quarantine period are higher than the regular housing *per diem* rates, which constitutes a waste of research dollars. In my opinion, cost should not be considered as a justification for the removal of a quarantine period.

When these arguments fail to convince the IACUC to waive the quarantine period for his rats, Church complains to the IO, who tries to influence the IACUC to reverse its decision. The IO’s behavior is inappropriate. The *Guide*<sup>1</sup> states, “the IO is responsible for resource planning and ensuring the alignment of Program goals and quality of animal care and use with the institution’s mission.” The IO should be reminded of the fact that a quality animal care and use program includes ensuring the health and safety of all the institution’s animals. I would recommend that the IACUC and attending veterinarian meet directly with the IO to discuss why the quarantine procedures are in place and their importance for disease prevention within the animal facilities.

I think the IACUC and veterinarian should stick to their guns and require quarantine of the animals, because that is the right thing to do. Dealing with a bully in a higher position is never easy, but the IACUC should stand up for what is right.

1. Institute for Laboratory Animal Research. *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* 8th edn. (National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2011).

Hollander is Animal Compliance and Training Officer, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

RESPONSE

A role dilemma

Brian L. Ermeling, DVM, MS, DACLAM & Herod Howard, DVM, MS, DACLAM

This scenario poses several questions and concerns. Did Wright consider all options to protect the colonies and facilitate research? Could she be more flexible, or should she be more definitive? Did she need to involve the IACUC? Did the Institutional Official (IO) handle this situation appropriately? Does the IO have the ethics and political clout needed to act in this role as the IO? Does Wright report to the IO and have periodic discussions on veterinary care issues?

It is unclear whether Wright evaluated the health of the transgenic rats to be imported to determine whether the importation poses a risk to the existing colonies. The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*<sup>1</sup> indicates that veterinary medical staff should implement procedures for evaluating the health and, if appropriate, the pathogen status of newly received animals. Information from suppliers about animal quality should be sufficient to enable a veterinarian to establish the appropriate length of quarantine, define the potential risks to personnel and animals in the colony, determine whether therapy is required before animals are released from quarantine and, in the case of rodents, determine whether rederivation (cesarean or embryo transfer) is necessary to free the animals of specific pathogens. Wright should evaluate the health status of this colony and determine whether importing animals to Great Eastern University poses any risk to existing colonies. In this case, the animals’ health status may be acceptable and an alternative to the standard quarantine process may be worth consideration. I would suggest that Wright work with Church to come to a solution that will assure the health of the rodent colonies and allow him to

