

New guidelines will improve transportation of research animals

This January, the National Research Council published extensive, science-based guidelines for the humane transportation of laboratory animals¹. This long-overdue report addresses national and international concerns about the welfare of agricultural and laboratory animals during their transportation, describing current problems and offering recommendations on how to correct them. The guidelines presented here are not formal regulations, but this and previous Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) publications are often consulted in order to improve animal welfare and compliance with animal welfare regulations.

This report, further, offers the following major recommendations:

- Update and implement the national Primate Plan to include national non-human primate resources and ensure financial allowances for costs of chartering private airplane transportation of nonhuman primates, due to increasing concerns about the difficulties of working with the declining number of commercial companies that are willing to transport nonhuman primates.

- Establish an interagency group to coordinate the complex federal regulations governing the transport of laboratory animals.

- Clarification by federal agencies of confusing and inconsistent regulations on transporting animals and animal products, especially those within the Animal Welfare Act regulations.

- Designation by research institutions of a single individual to be responsible for ensuring safe transportation of research animals, because of the numerous and complex issues and regulations involved.

1. National Research Council. *Guidelines for the Humane Transport of Laboratory Animals* (National Academies Press, Washington, DC, 2006).