October updates: people and places

APHIS staff updates

Effective August 4, the United States Department of Agriculture has announced several leadership changes at the Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Bernadette Juarez, Deputy Administrator of Animal Care since 2016, is now the Deputy Administrator for Biotechnology Regulatory Services. In the meantime, Betty Goldentyer will serve as Acting Deputy Administrator, while Jerry Rushin will fill her role as Animal Care Associate Deputy Administrator. Additional staff changes were announced in a [July 22nd APHIS weekly digest email](#).

Charles River expands on the west coast

Massachusetts-based **Charles River Laboratories** has announced plans for a new vivarium facility in south San Francisco. Charles River will staff the facility to provide animal husbandry and vivarium management support to research clients renting space there.

“Building infrastructure is often expensive, time consuming, and may not be the right approach when looking to conduct early discovery work. We are proud to offer a cost-effective alternative in South San Francisco that enables small, virtual or start-up companies to outsource vivarium management, allowing them to focus on their research. Larger commercial and academic institutions benefit from an expanded, flexible footprint without a cost-prohibitive build,” commented Colin Dunn of Charles Rivers’ Global Research Models & Services in a press release.

The ‘turnkey’ facility, known as the Charles River Accelerator and Development Lab, is planned to open in early 2020.

NASH off the shelf at Taconic

An off-the-shelf diet-induced mouse model of nonalcoholic steatohepatitis is now available from model provider **Taconic**. The company suggests the new model will save time, as interested researchers will no longer have to wait for animals to be conditioned to display NASH-relevant phenotypes.

Commercial worms complete new funding round

NemaMetrix, an Oregon-based company that provides *C. elegans* phenotyping and analysis, has announced the closure of a \$5 million funding round, led by Oregon Venture fund. The company will use the money to expand its drug discovery platform, Precisome.

Additionally, Stephen Turner, Chief Technical Officer at genome sequencing company Pacific Bioscience, has joined NemaMetrix as a senior research fellow.

NemaMetrix CEO Matt Beadet commented in the press for the announcement, “The funding we have secured will help us to improve our Precisome platform for a range of disease-modelling applications, helping researchers more efficiently uncover valuable insights into disease mechanisms. Translating these findings from the lab to the clinic, we look forward to working with Dr Turner, who will use his extensive industry knowledge to build our partnerships with research organizations, scientists and clinicians.”

AAALAC reaccreditations

West Virginia University’s animal care programs at its Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center, Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institutes, and College of Arts & Sciences in Morgantown have recently received re-accreditation from AAALAC International. “I think of accreditation as a strong indication of our commitment to the responsible use of animals in the research laboratory and classroom,” WVU vice president for research Fred King said in a press release. “AAALAC accreditation is held in such regard by the National Institutes of Health that it is accepted in lieu of a more extensive description of our program that would be required with every grant application.” WVU’s program received its initial accreditation from AAALAC International in 2016.

The animal care program at the **University of Hawai’i** was also recently re-accredited by AAALAC International. “I was pleased by AAALAC’s commendations of Sylvia Kondo and her team for providing

and maintaining a high-quality program of laboratory animal care and use,” said Office of Research Compliance Director Victoria Rivera in a release. “The accreditation team found that UH’s institutional support of the program was especially noteworthy, which serves as a validation of our team’s hard work and dedication to meet AAALAC’s rigorous criteria.

Crack IT 2019 announced

The NC3Rs has announced its three CRACK IT Challenges for 2019. ‘Transgene Track’, sponsored by GSK and Novartis, will support the development of non-invasive imaging to evaluate CAR-T cells and adeno-associated viruses in vivo. ‘CleanCut’, sponsored by Novartis, Bayer, and Takeda, is intended to find an *in vitro* replacement for *in vivo* tumorigenicity studies of genome edited human hematopoietic stem cells. ‘Sharp and to the Point’, sponsored by AstraZeneca, GSK, the Royal Veterinary College, and the University of Sheffield, will encourage the development of a new device to quickly and safely change needs between animals.

A launch event was held on September 11th in London; interested applicants can find more information at the [NC3Rs’ CRACK IT website](#).

Applications open for BRAD fellowship

The 3rd Thursday each April celebrates Biomedical Research Awareness Day (BRAD), an initiative from Americans for Medical Progress (AMP) to support education and awareness about animal research. AMP has partnered with the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology to offer a fellowship to early career scientists in the fields of neuroscience, psychology, or pharmacology. Fellows will receive a \$5000 stipend and \$2000 for BRAD-related materials to help institutions plan their own BRAD programs. The application period will run from November 1 2019 until March 1, 2020. Interested applications can find more information on [the AMP website](#). □

Published online: 19 September 2019
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41684-019-0402-y>