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“Transport of Laboratory Animals”

This presentation will focus on the specific requirements for the transport of laboratory animals as developed recently by the Laboratory Animal Science Association’s working group.

Laboratory animals destined to be used ethically in scientific research, and especially rodents, are reared to a defined health status, and this needs to be maintained throughout the journey from the supplier to the research scientist. Maintenance of the health status can be achieved by the use of bio-secure transport containers, which then impose other restrictions on their conditions of carriage. The design, use and restrictions of these containers will be discussed.

Consignments of laboratory animals usually comprise several animals of the same sex and age travelling together in group conditions which demands that there are recommended stocking densities according to type and ventilation performance of the shipping crate. The process by which we arrived at these recommended densities will be discussed as well as how the stocking densities should be modified according to the biological features of the animals. Although genetically altered animals, most of which are mice, usually have no phenotypic abnormality, some may be less ‘fit to travel’ as others. Specific legislation permits transport of these animals under defined circumstances which can add to the complexity of the journey. Planning a ‘quality’ journey, which has all the appropriate contingencies, is essential because the preferred route for transport may not be possible because of carrier restrictions and availability.

The aforementioned points will be discussed in relation to the specific requirements and conditions recommended for the transport of laboratory rodents, primates, and minipigs.

Jeremy Swallow, BVMS, MVM, MRCVS, received in Masters Degree in Veterinary Neurology in 1974. Dr. Swallow was in general practice for five years prior to joining Novartis (then Ciba-Geigy) as a veterinary clinician supporting their research programs. He has worked as the Veterinary Director for Charles Rive UK before joining Pfizer Global Research and Development in 1996 as their Named Veterinary Surgeon. During both these latter two occupations he has been involved in the transport of laboratory animals being instrumental in the production of the first set of guidance on conditions for the transport of laboratory animals published in the Laboratory Animals journal during 1992 and writing a chapter on the subject for the 7th Edition of the UFAW Handbook on the Care & Management of Laboratory Animals, published during 1999.

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