

27 per cent. Transgenic rat use has doubled since 1997, which the report attributes to refinements in the technology used to produce such animals. On the other hand, the use of ascitic animals in monoclonal antibody production fell as a result of the Home Office's initiative to phase out their use, and the number of acute lethal quantitative toxicity tests decreased by 15 000. Primate use also fell, but it is harder to see whether this reflects a trend or is simply random variation. The majority of procedures are carried out by commercial companies, with toxicity testing accounted for 21 per cent of the total.

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*Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain 1998* (1999). The Stationery Office: London. 108pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, UK and other usual HMSO sources. Price £15.00.

### **Newly adopted Recommendations for the keeping of domestic ducks, geese and fur animals**

The Standing Committee of the European Convention on the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes recently adopted Recommendations on the keeping of domestic ducks, Muscovy ducks, hybrids (of Muscovy and domestic ducks), and fur animals. While any measures which aim to raise standards of care across Europe are to be applauded, there are a number of inconsistencies, omissions and areas requiring further clarification in these Recommendations which, unfortunately, weaken their impact.

On a positive note, the Recommendations clearly identify the meeting of species-specific needs as important in the keeping of all animals, and acknowledge the importance of regularly updating these Recommendations to keep pace with advances in our scientific knowledge. *Articles 21* (referring to fur animals and Muscovy ducks) and *22* (referring to geese and domestic ducks) highlight the importance of selecting for criteria that improve an animal's health and welfare, in addition to selecting for production criteria, and call for further research in this area. *Article 25* of each Recommendation requires that every Recommendation should be reviewed within 5 years of coming into force.

Other positive points include the specific statement that no animal should be kept for its fur if: i) the conditions of the Recommendation pertaining to the keeping of fur animals cannot be met; or ii) if the animal belongs to a species whose members, despite these conditions being met, cannot adapt to captivity without welfare problems (*Article 1*). Coupled with the statements that the design of enclosures must be such that they fulfil an animal's biological needs and should allow sufficient room to perform normal locomotory behaviour (*Article 9*), and the request from the Standing Committee to be informed annually of the results of research into the welfare, husbandry and humane killing of these animals (*Articles 23 and 24*), this declaration offers hope of real improvements and rapid change within the fur industry.

The Recommendations also highlight provision of water to meet species requirements. Water for bathing, or at least enough for complete immersion of the head, is now recognized as an important biological requirement of geese, domestic and Muscovy ducks and must be provided for them (*Articles 10 and 11*). For fur animals, the opportunity to swim is identified as necessary for coypu but not for farmed mink. This is despite the earlier identification of the integral role that water plays in the ecology of the wild mink. However, indications are given that this is an area where change is likely as further research is published.

On the downside, despite laudable preambles and Articles that provide good reviews of the biological characteristics of each species, many of the issues these raise are not adequately addressed within the main body of the Recommendations. A notable omission is the failure to list minimum accommodation sizes for geese, domestic and Muscovy ducks; instead, the

(various biological) demands are satisfied – with no further guidance as to suggested size. While minimum accommodation sizes are listed for the fur animal species, they are notably smaller than those considered acceptable for the housing of the species in laboratories.

One inconsistency, even allowing for the variation that exists between the information covered by similarly numbered Articles across the Recommendations, is that analogous Articles and subsections use differing wording. *Article 4* (subsection 4) of the Recommendations for geese (and *Article 3* [subsection 4] of the Recommendations for Muscovy ducks) deal with requirements for space and state: ‘The size or density of the group should not be too large.’ No further guidance is given as to what constitutes ‘too large’. It is not obvious why the explanatory caveat, found in the analogous subsection in the Recommendations for domestic ducks (*Article 4* [subsection 4]) which adds ‘...with respect to the possibility to supervise the group’, was not used universally. Such oversights make consistent application of the Recommendations more difficult than need be.

Other inconsistencies and omissions seem to be the result of a failure to adequately coordinate the advice of the pan-European committees that drew up these Recommendations (admittedly a tricky job). It might be expected that the 25 Articles contained within each of the Recommendations would be consistent in the nature of the information to which they relate. However, while *Article 3* in the Recommendations for both domestic ducks and geese relate to issues concerned with the biological characteristics of the each species, in the Recommendations relating to the keeping of fur animals and Muscovy ducks, *Article 3* relates to stockmanship and inspection. More confusingly, details of the action required of a stockman who detects that animals are apparently not in good health, or are showing signs of behavioural aberration, are contained, respectively, in *Article 8* (subsection 2) of the Recommendations for geese and ducks, *Article 7* (subsection 2) of those for Muscovy ducks, and in *Article 5* (subsection 2) of the Recommendations for fur animals.

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*Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes: Recommendation concerning domestic geese (Anser anser, f domesticus, Anser cygnoides, f domesticus) and their crossbreeds; Recommendation concerning domestic ducks (Anas platyrhynchos); Recommendation concerning Muscovy ducks (Carina moschata) and hybrids of Muscovy and domestic ducks (Anas platyrhynchos); Recommendation concerning fur animals.* Council of Europe (1999). Council of Europe: Strasbourg. Obtainable from, the Directorate of Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe, Division of Public and International Law, F-67075, Strasbourg, Cedex, France. Free.