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APR 14 2008

Dr. Samuel H. Wilson
Acting Director
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
P.O. Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Dr. Wilson:

I am replying to your letter dated October 25, 2007 requesting the Department of Defense's (DoD) review of four *in vitro* test recommendations from the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM). The Department endorses using the Bovine Corneal Opacity and Permeability (BCOP) assay and the Isolated Chicken Eye (ICE) assay for screening certain classes of potentially corrosive or irritating substances. These tests are currently limited in their ability to assess toxicological mechanisms and evaluate medical countermeasure efficacy. However, these two tests can be appropriate in a tiered testing strategy to augment or replace the use of animals for general chemical safety testing. The Department does not currently have research programs that are relevant for using the Isolated Rabbit Eye (IRE) assay and the Hen's Egg Test- Chorioallantoic Membrane (HET-CAM) assay as currently described by the ICCVAM test recommendation. Department of Defense Directive 3216.1 requires researchers to consider all valid alternatives to using animals in all research endeavours. When these four test methods are appropriate to support the research goals, the researchers will consider these tests in order to meet the requirement to replace, reduce or refine the use of animals in research programs.

The Department will use a variety of mechanisms to promote and encourage the use of these test methods. Informing Department scientists and veterinarians will be accomplished through activities such as newsletters and training sessions for both Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) members and laboratory personnel. Extramural scientists supporting defense research will be informed of these alternative test methods through their interactions with Department personnel and IACUCs. The Department of Defense takes very seriously our responsibility to develop and use methods that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research.

I appreciate your leadership role in the federal government's effort to identify and validate alternatives to using animals in research. The ICCVAM has been instrumental in facilitating federal-wide endorsement of alternatives to animal use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Foster".

Robert E. Foster, Ph.D.
Director, BioSystems

