

BIOSCIENCES FEDERATION

Peer House, 8-14 Verulam Street, London, WC1X 8LZ
Email: cwallace.bsf@physoc.org Website: www.bsf.ac.uk
Registered Charity No. 1103894

Global Animal Health Team
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

20th July 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Consultation on veterinary checks on rabies-susceptible animals

The Biosciences Federation is a single authority representing the UK's biological expertise, providing independent opinion to inform public policy and promoting the advancement of the biosciences. The Federation is actively working to influence policy and strategy in biology-based research and in school and university teaching. It is also concerned about the translation of research into benefits for society, and about the impact of legislation and regulations on the ability of those working in teaching and research to deliver effectively. The Federation represents a cumulative membership of over 70,000 individuals, covering the full spectrum of biosciences from physiology and neuroscience, biochemistry and microbiology, to ecology, taxonomy and environmental science.

The Biosciences Federation (BSF) is concerned that proposals to inspect all commercial consignments of rabies-susceptible animals on entry into the UK at an approved border inspection post may compromise the health and welfare of laboratory animals imported into the UK and have a significant negative impact on the ability to conduct research using these animals.

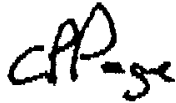
Channeling laboratory animal imports through the two existing border inspection posts will inevitably lead to longer journey times for the significant number of animals that are destined for establishments distant from Heathrow or Gatwick with a likely detrimental impact on the welfare of the animals concerned. Also, it cannot be assumed that carriers and ground handling agents operating at Heathrow and Gatwick are willing to handle all animals imported for research use, particularly as they will be increasingly vulnerable to pressure from anti-vivisection groups.

Any meaningful veterinary checks require the animals to be released from their transport containment. Many of these animals will be of a specific pathogen-free health status, or may be immune-compromised. Exposure to the environment in an animal collection facility at a border inspection post, where other animals of multiple species may be present, is likely to compromise their health status and may even mean they cannot be accepted at the destination facility.

In view of these concerns, BSF urges that laboratory animals are granted exemption from inspection at border inspection posts by the adoption of either option 1 or 2.

Should you require further information please contact Dr Caroline Wallace in the first instance (email: cwallace.bsf@physoc.org).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Page'.

Professor Clive Page
Chair, Animal Sciences Group