

5. Support the timely international adoption of alternative methods.

The goal of such international co-operation is to reduce the number of animals required in laboratory tests and hence improve the welfare of laboratory animals worldwide.

Memorandum of Co-operation (April 2009). Agreement signed by the ECVAM, JACVAM, ICCVAM and Canada's Environmental Health Science and Research Bureau, regarding the International Co-operation on Alternative Test Methods. Available at: http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov/docs/about_docs/ICATM-MOC.pdf.

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Novel farm animal welfare web portal now available

Developed in partnership with a number of international collaborators, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has recently launched a new website that it hopes will act as a central and reliable source of farm animal welfare information. Hosted and managed by the FAO, the objectives of the web portal are to raise awareness of farm animal welfare issues, foster national and international partnerships, and facilitate the funding, implementation and dissemination of animal welfare initiatives.

The website is aimed at a wide variety of users, including: farmers, policy makers, researchers, and animal welfare

organisations. Various sources of relevant information may be accessed on the site through easy-to-use links, such as: events, codes of practice and recommendations, scientific and technical papers, training material and funding opportunities. In addition, an advanced search mechanism is available to search the entire site for particular organisations, people, documents or data of interest. There is also a facility that allows individuals or organisations, once registered, to submit their own details or reports to the website. Information may be put forward in any language and once it has been deemed "pertinent, factual, notable, verifiable with cited sources, and neutrally presented", the data will be uploaded, usually within 24–72 hours of submission.

It is anticipated that the website will provide a valuable resource and, in particular, will be of benefit to less economically developed countries, thereby improving livestock health, welfare and productivity worldwide. Future plans for the website include hosting web-based events such as electronic conferences and seminars, and developing participatory projects on relevant topics.

Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare (May 2009). Website managed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/animal-welfare/en/>.

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