

*Live Animals Regulations, 24th edition.* International Air Transport Association (1997). International Air Transport Association: Montreal. 350pp. Paperback. Obtainable from regional suppliers, and Customer Service Representation, International Air Transport Association, 2000 Peel Street, Montreal, Canada H3A 2R4 (<http://www.iata.org> [ISBN 9290359706]). Price £70.00.

### Review of scientific procedures

The *Interim Report on the Review of the Operation of The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* was published in *The Report of the Animals Procedures Committee for 1996*. The review was conducted to mark the Act's 10th anniversary, and in it the Animals Procedures Committee (APC) sought the views of users, animal protection and welfare groups and other interested organizations. The review will not be completed until 1998, but at this stage the Committee has already concluded that the 1986 Act is functioning adequately, and they do not feel that major changes in legislation are necessary.

However, this interim report does list 13 major recommendations, all of which have been accepted by the Home Secretary. Probably the recommendation most likely to attract interest is that the APC intends to produce an extended statement on the assessment of costs and benefits, required by section 5(4) of the Act. This will be no mean task. In 1993, the then Chief Inspector published a formulation indicating how the Home Office Inspectorate weigh costs and benefits. Despite this, it remains very difficult to see how benefits can be measured and off set against costs. As a recent document produced by the Boyd group has argued, the importance of the outcome at the start of a project is often uncertain; it is often difficult to judge the relative merits of research, and it can be difficult to quantify the likely benefits.

The interim report recommends that proper training should be required for those using Schedule 1 methods of killing animals, and that certificate holders should be trained to assist them to carry out their responsibilities under the Act. This is particularly important as the certificate holder is the key to the on-site administration and effectiveness of the Act. Users will also be glad that the Home Office *Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* is to be revised to include the numerous changes that have taken place to the operation of the Act since its inception.

Confidence in the operation of the act will also be strengthened by the fact that the Home Office will publicize the procedures by which infringements are handled, and that more resources will be invested in the Inspectorate and the operation of the Act. This was an idea promoted both by users and animal protectionists in their response to the consultation. Another area of agreement, was the need for the development and promotion of so called 'alternatives', that is: Reduction, Refinement and Replacement, the 3R framework developed in 1959 by the UFAW scholars Russell and Burch in their book *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. It was, therefore, particularly disturbing to read in the same APC report that the UK Government will be investing only £182 000 in the APC's 1997-1998 budget (a decrease of 28% from the 1995-1996 figure) which is used to fund research in this area. It is to be hoped that the publication of this interim review will help to strengthen the APC's voice for next year's budget round.

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*Interim Report on the Review of the Operation of The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.* In: *The Report of the Animals Procedures Committee 1996.* (1997) Appendix B, pp23-35. HMSO: London. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT and other usual HMSO sources. Price £8.10.