

## **Services offered by the Laboratory Animals Bureau (Medical Research Council)**

### **Contributors**

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## SERVICES OFFERED BY THE

# LABORATORY ANIMALS BUREAU

(MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL)

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In 1945 a committee appointed by a number of scientific societies prepared a memorandum on the supply of experimental animals. As a result of this, the Laboratory Animals' Bureau was set up in 1947 to act as a clearing house for information about the production, supply, maintenance and use of laboratory animals. The information it has collected is offered to all whose work involves the use of animals; in particular the Bureau provides the following services:

### SUPPLIES OF ANIMALS.

The Bureau does not itself supply animals, but those who notify the Bureau of their requirements of any species will be given the names of suitable suppliers (a convenient *Requisition Card* is obtainable from the Bureau for this purpose).

#### 1. Guinea Pigs, Mice and Rabbits (Accredited Stocks).

In order to exercise some control over the quality of commercial stocks, which form a high proportion of the total supplies of these species, a system of *accreditation* has recently been introduced. To become accredited, a breeder must:—

- (a) Raise stock predominantly, if not entirely, for laboratory use;
- (b) maintain a closed colony, subject to a period of quarantine if, for any reason, it is necessary to introduce outside stock;
- (c) supply to the laboratory direct and not from or through any agent or dealer;
- (d) observe standards in the management of his stud which are consistent with the production of first-class stock, with particular emphasis on the prevention and control of infection.

In return are offered facilities for laboratory investigations and technical advice, favourable scales of rationed foodstuffs and other advantages. A register of accredited breeders is available on request.

Breeders may justifiably look to users for co-operation in the working of the Accreditation Scheme, and the following points deserve particular mention:—

(a) Whenever demand is reasonably steady, or predictable, contracts or orders in advance should be placed. An unexpected demand, especially if heavy, can often only be met by "buying in"—a practice which is not legitimate for the accredited breeder. Even if the acceptance of regular supplies leads to occasional surpluses, it will usually be found to be economical over a period in view of the better quality to be expected.

(b) reports on the quality of animals obtained, whether favourable or adverse, are the chief means by which the Bureau can keep a check on accredited stocks (and for that matter other supplies). Users are asked to send such reports to the Bureau whenever occasion demands: they will be treated as confidential.

(c) many breeders are in a small way of business, and prompt payment of accounts is a matter of great importance to them. For the same reason, immediate return of travelling boxes (where returnable) should be the rule.

#### 2. Monkeys.

Arrangements exist for obtaining certain species of monkeys from West Africa at prices generally below that of Indian monkeys. The common ones are the baboon (*Papio* spp.) and the green monkey (*Cercopithecus* spp.), but others can be had. Requirements should be notified to the Bureau as long as possible in advance. It is not intended to import these monkeys during the winter months.

#### 3. Dogs and Cats.

The supply of these animals is constantly difficult and the prices asked by dealers are often higher than many laboratories consider reasonable. The Bureau is able to obtain supplies from time to time; requisitions for these should state the price which the laboratory is prepared to pay.

#### 4. All other vertebrates.

The Bureau is able to put users in touch with sources of supply of other vertebrates, both native and exotic, and including non-accredited guinea pigs, mice and

rabbits, in response to notification of requirements. The Bureau does not undertake to provide a general register of suppliers: indeed this would be valueless without detailed comments on each source of supply, and these details are constantly being amended and brought up to date. On the other hand, specific enquiries will be answered as fully as possible.

#### 5. Pure lines.

The Bureau has compiled a register of inbred strains and pure lines of various species which are being maintained in this country. *In order to keep this register up to date, it would be appreciated if those who are maintaining such strains and have not so far notified the Bureau, would do so.* (The Bureau will not pass on this information to other users unless it is expressly stated that a small breeding nucleus at the least can be made available.)

#### 6. Invertebrates.

Catalogues of arthropods, helminths, molluscs and protozoa of medical and veterinary interest which are available in Great Britain were prepared in 1949 and will be supplied on request. Since these catalogues were compiled, further information about the availability in other countries of certain invertebrates has been obtained by the Bureau.

#### INFORMATION AND ADVICE.

The Bureau holds a considerable collection of reprints of articles dealing with the maintenance and breeding of laboratory animals. References or photostats will be gladly supplied, but it is regretted that reprints cannot be lent. Enquiries are also invited on the subject of animal house equipment; both as to design of houses, cages, racks, feeding and drinking utensils, etc., and also as to firms which specialise in the manufacture of animal house equipment, appliances and materials.

#### ANNUAL CONGRESS OF ANIMAL TECHNICIANS.

The policy of the Bureau is to hold annually a congress of animal technicians for the exchange of information regarding matters of interest in the animal house. It is proposed to hold these congresses in a different centre each year.

At the 1950 Congress a new technical organisation, the Animal Technicians' Association, was formed. This Association will place the provision of training for animal technicians prominently among its activities as an essential contribution towards improving the quality of laboratory animals.

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*All enquiries should be addressed to:—*

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