

A. Introduction

The Animal Protection Law (The Law) was approved by the Legislative Yuan and promulgated by the President of Republic of China in 1998 (Appendix 1). The Council of Agriculture (COA), the Executive Yuan is pointed to implement The Law. The Law consists of 40 articles and being divided into 6 chapters. According to The Law, the “animal” is defined as any vertebrate being kept by the citizen of our country (Item 1, Article 3, Chapter I General Provision). Thus, the “animal” is not only a pet or a farm animal, but also a laboratory animal. And in Item 3 of Article 3, the “laboratory animal” is further defined as the animal being kept for any scientific purpose. Thus, when one used the vertebrate animals for research, teaching or testing, he/she is regulated by The Law. In other words, under The Law of Taiwan, laboratory animals are not only those animals being used in biomedical application but agricultural studies. According to Article 16, Chapter III, the institution that performs the scientific application with animals shall organize a Laboratory Animal Care and Use Panel (LACUP) or IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) to supervise the activity. This mechanism is similar to that of most of the countries.

In order to understand the impact of The Law to the community of laboratory animal users, since 2003 the Council of Agriculture (COA) has collaborated with the Chinese Society for Laboratory Animal Science (CSLAS) and conducted a 5-year project.

The project consists of 2 parts.

The first part is to understand the institutions in which the animals are used for scientific application by site visiting. This is made by a multi-disciplinary team which consists of the 1) committee members of the Experimental Animal Ethics Committee (EAEC), COA, 2) professionals of CSLAS, and 3) officers of animal protection from the local governments. The COA selects 40 institutions systemically for evaluation each year since there are approximately 200 institutions in Taiwan involving the animal application for various purposes. The CSLAS documents the performance evaluation and forwards to the institutions and also gathered the institutions’ suggestions and difficulties in operation of The Law for the COA. In other words, to achieve the

goal of The Law, the objective of the first part is a learning process of interactions among different parties of people i.e. laboratory animal users, government officials and peoples of the society.

The second part is the performance statistics which is made by the data provided yearly by all of the IACUCs across the country. The present annual report is the 2nd edition. It documents the statistics of general condition in use of laboratory animals of Taiwan in 2004 and 2005. The editorial board refined the data, and reduced the content in this volume in comparison of the 1st edition, since this ongoing documentation is to understand how the humane use and care of Laboratory Animals in Taiwan will evolve at the end of the project. This brief English version shall assist our exchange of information and communication with international communities for the effort to promote the welfare of laboratory animals.