Annual Animal Science Meeting
2013

Improving Communication
Biologist perspective

Dr Clive DaCosta (Principal Scientific Officer at LRI)
People Who Are Involved in Animal Welfare

Scientist

Animal Technician

Veterinary Surgeon
Responsibilities of the relevant parties

• Design and conduct of research
• Appropriate consideration to the 3Rs
• Adopt a culture of care
• Ensuring the animals are afforded high levels of welfare and protection
Scientist

• Establish a working relationship with the technicians and vets involved in the studies
• Good understanding and obligation toward the animal and their welfare
• Understanding of animal technicians and veterinary surgeons roles to contribute to improve the animal welfare
Minimal Information Flow

• Breedings with a brief description of the genes involved.
• Purpose of the cross, ie where is gene deleted, Knockin, constitutively active etc.
• Expected phenotype
• Anticipate Unexpected Phenotype
• Clear instructions if animal is sick
Communication failure

• Cross with known phenotype
  – tumours at 3 months of age
  – further gene crossed in (potential tumour promoter)
  – predicted earlier onset of tumour burden
  – details given and regular physical checks expected with this cohort to pick-up early stage tumours
  – what happened: visual checks once a day
  – result: early stage tumour formation missed
Resolution

• Communication, training and knowledge gap
• Senior animal house staff and scientist generated a plan of action
• 1-2-1 training and observation of staff involved
• Scoring system developed to encompass known/expected/unexpected phenotypes with close adherence to project licence parameters (severity limits)
Scientist’s Engagement

- Short talks to animal staff (2-3 x per year)
  - experimental crosses with a brief description of the genes involved
  - purpose of the cross, i.e., where is gene deleted, knockin, constitutively active etc.
  - expected phenotype, animal passport
  - anticipate unexpected phenotype
  - clear instructions if animal is sick, humane killing in adherence with project licence
  - aims of the lab (project licence)