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The Norwegian Reference Centre for Laboratory Animal Science &amp; Alternatives

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By Adrian Smith

**Mission statement for the Laboratory Animal Unit, Norwegian School of Veterinary Science**

1. The Unit's primary aims are:

- to be a national centre of competence within the field of laboratory animal science.
- to provide facilities, animals and knowledge of laboratory animal science for research and teaching, in keeping with the School's activity programme and strategy document.
- to participate in the international efforts to refine or replace animal experiments, in agreement with the ideals embodied in the three R's (*Replacement, Reduction, Refinement*).

2) In order to achieve these primary aims, the Unit has the following secondary goals:

- the Unit aims to be Norway's leading centre of competence within the following sector
  - teaching and training in laboratory animal science
  - alternatives to animal experiments
  - health monitoring of laboratory animals
  - the spreading of information about animal experimentation
  - animal welfare and ethics as applied to laboratory animal
- the Unit will continue to improve its own quality assurance to ensure both that the experiments performed there conform to existing legislation and ethical standards, and that the results of these experiments are reliable and reproducible

3) Strategies to achieve these aims:

- through cooperation with the National Institute of Public Health and the National Veterinary Institute, the Unit will work for an expansion of its facilities and an increase in the number of scientific and technical/administrative staff.
- the Unit will arrange courses in laboratory animal science and will assist other institutions in their efforts to arrange their own courses. Such courses will be held for veterinary students, animal nurse students, researchers, technicians and competent persons (*ansvarshavende*). The production of compendia, the spread of information on the Internet and internal training of the Unit's staff are all important aids to this work. Courses for external users will be self-financing.
- the Unit will carry out research both for the School's own researchers and for external users. This work results in experience and a contact network that is useful both for future research at the Unit and for teaching content, at the same time as it increases the Unit's external income.
- the Unit will build up competence on alternatives to animal experiments, among other things by means of its own database, which ought to be financed totally by external income.
- the Unit will use its own Internet server actively to spread information about laboratory animal science to users and the general public. This information includes electronic tours of the Unit in several languages.
- the Unit will play an active role in the debate in the society on the use of animals in general, and of laboratory animals in particular. An important part of this work will continue to be guided tours for schoolchildren.
- the Unit will continue to offer its services to the civil service within the field of laboratory animal science, under conditions to be discussed, in particular in relation to matters arising during the implementation of the European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrates used for Scientific and other Purposes.

Approved by the Board of the School on 30th September 1998.

*This page was updated 04.05.2006.*


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