

**Dear readers,**

the Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences are now accessible on the ALTEX homepage. The Editor's choice of the best submissions will be published additionally in ALTEX, starting in this issue with four manuscripts based on exceptional plenary lectures:

Michael Balls, Alan M. Goldberg and Melvin E. Andersen each set down their personal and insights gained in their long experience in the 3Rs field, returning to *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*, the seminal book written by Bill Russell and Rex Burch in 1959, to demonstrate that many insights and warnings already formulated half a century ago are still relevant today and in want of our urgent attention, and looking ahead to the future of toxicity testing to show where we stand and what needs to be done to put the vision of an entirely *in vitro* toxicity testing platform using human cells into practice. These inspiring viewpoints come at a perfect time when many workshops are dealing with the challenge of establishing a concrete roadmap to the goals put forward in the NRC's *Toxicity Testing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Vision and a Strategy* published in 2007.

Next to the goals of making the scientific approach to toxicity testing better, so providing better protection of consumers and the environment, Ingrid E. Newkirk from PETA reminds us of the lack of empathy and the maltreatment that experimental animals are often still subjected to today, and calls on all scientists to actively participate in striving towards a more humane science.

In his "Food for Thought ..." series Thomas Hartung turns to nanoparticle safety testing, a new area of safety testing which represents special challenges on account of the physico-chemical properties of nanoparticles.

In the main articles, Philipp Holzmann et al. describe how the CAM-Model (chick chorioallantoic membrane) was used to elucidate which step in the preparation of allogeneic bone grafts for transplantation causes them to lose their ability to support vascularisation. Maša Skelin et al. give an overview of the usefulness of pancreatic beta cell lines in current use for *in vitro* investigations of insulin secretion mechanisms and Silke Bitz discusses the state of affairs regarding the testing of botulinum neurotoxin. This is currently done on animals to deter-

mine the potency of every batch, regardless whether the batch is intended for medicinal or cosmetic use although alternative methods have been developed.

In the news items we are delighted to report that the *in vitro* reconstructed epidermis (RhE) test method for skin irritation has been accepted as an OECD Test Guideline. BASF is distributing its newly designed opacitometer for the Bovine Corneal Opacity and Permeability (BCOP) test for identifying corrosives and severe ocular irritants, which was adopted as an OECD Test Guideline in 2009, and Biotest has launched Pyro-Detect, which can be used to perform the Monocyte Activation Test with an IL-1 $\beta$  response, an alternative to the rabbit pyrogen test introduced into the European Pharmacopoeia this year. After the long process of assay development and validation, the accessibility of reliable equipment and test systems is vital to ensure a test can be put to proper use.

The inaugural ceremony of CAAT-EU, a communication platform for science, industry, regulatory authorities and animal welfare organisations based at the University of Konstanz, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March was well attended and its first t<sup>4</sup> workshops on "Education and 3R activities" as well as "Marine Biotoxins" are announced in the joint CAATfeed from CAAT and CAAT-EU.

The next major congress in the 3Rs field is only a few months away: the 16<sup>th</sup> Linz Congress on Alternatives to Animal Testing will be held together with the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress on In Vitro Toxicology this year. Hosted by EUSAAT, ESTIV and zet on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at the University of Linz, Austria, this combined congress provides an excellent forum to present, discuss and exchange new ideas and critical questions for the benefit of alternative methods to animal experiments in an informal setting. The organisers have received over 200 abstracts and are looking forward to seeing many of you in the romantic town of Linz this autumn.

Hoping you especially enjoy the Highlights from WC7



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