



Dear ALTEX reader,

The current issue of ALTEX reports on a workshop held by the transatlantic think tank for toxicology (t⁴) with the aim of introducing our readers to the strategy and importance of the project. The articles describe the way forward for this century regarding our treatment of experimental animals and the abolition of toxicological animal tests.

The two-day workshop, held on the 13th to 14th of July at the Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, was titled “21st Century Validation Strategies for 21st Century Tools”. It consisted of four original papers, each followed by four invited responses and a discussion period. The papers, published in full in this issue of ALTEX, addressed topics of interest to regulators, industry and academic scientists charged with implementing the recommendations of the new approach to toxicological testing outlined in the National Academy of Sciences 2007 report, *Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century: A Vision and A Strategy*.

These articles by Joanna Jaworska and Sebastian Hoffmann, Kim Boekelheide and Mel Andersen, Thomas Hartung, and Daniel Dietrich, and the summary of the discussion compiled by Deborah Rudacille represent the first of a series of t⁴ workshop reports that will follow over the next years and will be published exclusively by ALTEX.

Perhaps these will one day be considered a next step to the ECVAM Workshops, which were held over many years and finally enabled the breakthrough of the 3R principle. The series was continued by two events hosted by CAAT-Europe in Konstanz on the 25th to 28th October, i.e. a workshop on 3R teaching and education, an extensive report on which is scheduled for publication in ALTEX in about 6 months time, and a Chemicals Information day, which we will cover in the next issue.

A further main article by Thomas Hartung analyses the new EU Directive 2010/63/EU. It is also available for download at www.altex-edition.org with a far more extensive table comparing the wording of the new Directive with its predecessor.

Marcel Leist, Liudmila Efremova and Christiaan Karreman give us their views on the essentials for compiling basic test method descriptions in toxicology with their contribution to the “Food for Thought ...” series.

Ursula Sauer has summarised the Nano-Workshop held at the Linz Congress and Laura Ducceschi reports in a short communication on the continued though slowing use of unethically sourced dogs and cats for educational purposes at universities and training centres in the US.

After Michael Balls was awarded the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Prize in Linz (ALTEX reported in 3/2010), he has now received a further distinction. We congratulate him for receiving the William and Eleanor Cave Award for his lifework, the journal ATLA.

The ICCVAM news reports on the newest developments in the replacement of the eye irritation test on rabbits and on an international workshop on alternatives for vaccine testing, which ICCVAM organised in Bethesda, MD, USA in September in collaboration with ECVAM and JACVAM. We have also received the news that the state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany will award Marcel Leist, Doerenkamp-Zbinden Professor at the University of Konstanz, the State Research Award in November. Congratulations!

Twenty-four years ago I wrote my first editorial for ALTEX, then still self-published under the German title “*Alternativen zu Tierexperimenten*”. As I look into that issue’s table of contents I see that many of the subjects are still topical today. We reported on the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) holding a status seminar on supporting research on alternative methods – such a workshop was just held again on the 24th of September in Berlin. The Academy for Animal Protection of the German Animal Protection Society had just been founded, Gotthard Teutsch published his first collection of “Literature on the Ethics of Animal Experiments” in our journal, and I personally formulated the hope that German-speaking animal welfare officers would accept our journal as a forum to exchange their views.

The coming year will bring changes at ALTEX: I will hand over my post as Editor-in-Chief to a young colleague. Sonja von Aulock, who grew up bilingually in South Africa and attained her Ph. D. and university teaching licence at the University of Konstanz, will determine the scientific contents of ALTEX in the future. I will remain managing director of ALTEX Edition, with the responsibility of enabling the continued publication of ALTEX. But of course, I will still contribute to the editorial work.

These were 24 exciting years for me and I thank all organisations that supported ALTEX over many years before the Society ALTEX Edition was founded to take over this responsibility. These were Zurich Animal Protection, the foundation Animalfree Research (then still called FFVFF) and later also the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation.

The citation index of ALTEX will certainly continue to rise. The journal will surely also be freshened up by Sonja von Aulock, I am looking forward to following this.

With this I say goodbye as Editor-in-Chief, though I remain loyal to the journal. I wish you, dear readers, a happy and healthy 2011.

Hoping you enjoy this issue

Franz P. Gruber