Terms of Reference

National Peer Review Meeting

Aquatic Animal Pathogen Containment Guidelines
For Laboratories and Live Holding Facilities

April 18, 2006
Precise location to be confirmed

Chairperson: Jake Rice

Preamble

The trigger for this peer review committee is the need by DFO Aquatic Animal Health Science in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) National Aquatic Animal Health Division and the Biohazard Containment & Safety Unit for an advisory process to help finalize and implement the National Aquatic Animal Pathogen Containment Guidelines for Laboratories and Live Holding Facilities.

The peer review committee should consider how the proposed guidelines would affect potential users (i.e. regulatory agencies responsible for protecting wild aquatic resources; researchers working with biologics for vaccine development, pathogenicity/epidemiological investigations; laboratories routinely handling aquatic animals for disease screening and diagnostics; as well as commercial, academic, private or government facilities working on aquatic organisms of unknown risk), new facilities and laboratories under development.

A literature review on decontamination and sterilization techniques of effluent and solid materials and testing protocols for the validation of those techniques will be commissioned and circulated to experts in the field for review and comment, then posted as a tool for others to use

National Peer Review Committee

A DFO-hosted national peer review will be held in April 2006 to review the draft guidelines and to provide science advice on research and development. Invited experts will receive copies of the draft guidelines approximately four weeks prior to the peer review.

The peer review will assess whether the physical and operational requirements presented in the guidelines are accurate, - supported by scientific data, and represent global knowledge. In addition, the peer review will provide science advice on the following:

1. if the physical and operational requirements are appropriate to all laboratory and facility types;

2. all the principles and factors influencing the transmission of pathogens or movement of biological material in aquatic environments have been taken into consideration within the proposed standards; and
3. if the handling of aquatic animal pathogens for experimental or commercial development purposes can be safely undertaken under the new guidelines without hampering future research and development activities;
4. whether scientific and national concerns are met;
5. the guidelines are both applicable and practical.

Outputs

A summary of the peer review discussions will be published in a Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) Proceeding. The recommended science advice will be published via one or more CSAS Status Reports.

Ultimately, the peer review committee will help DFO and CFIA to finalize and implement aquatic animal pathogen containment guidelines for laboratories and live holding facilities, assess applications for commercial, academic, private or government facilities working with aquatic animal pathogens, and protect the aquatic environment.