

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

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April 30, 2015

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 200-A
Washington, D.C. 20250

Catherine Woteki, PhD
Under Secretary, REE
Chief Scientist, USDA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 302-A
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Dr. Woteki:

This letter provides additional advice and recommendations in response to the report and findings from the Agricultural Research Service – Animal Handling and Welfare Review Panel (ARS-AHWR). The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board appreciates the opportunity to provide this additional advice.

The NAREEE Advisory Board held a public meeting via teleconference on April 14, 2015, with the members of the ARS-AHWR Panel and staff of the Research, Extension, and Education mission area to discuss the report and findings from the Panel's site visit to the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) in Clay Center, Nebraska. The Board heard an overview of the charge to the panel and a summary of the findings and recommendations. In addition, the Board heard verbal comments. Written comments were submitted via email.

The NAREEE Advisory Board commends the ARS-AHWR Panel for a thorough and comprehensive review of the animal handling and care at the USMARC. The charge to the Panel

was clear and concise. Their resulting report provided a clear understanding that the animals on site were not being mistreated and appropriately identified measures that must be implemented in order to ensure policies and procedures are appropriately followed. The NAREEE Advisory Board commends USDA for the efforts to date on implementing these recommendations.

As a result of the discussion on April 14, 2015, the NAREEE Advisory Board identified the following recommendations to USDA:

- The USMARC and University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) agreements identified in Recommendation 1 of the Final Report from the ARS-AHWR Panel should also include clearly documented provisions on the appropriate animal handling and use policies and procedures.
- USDA should continue to ensure that the recommendations submitted by the ARS-AHWR are appropriately implemented at USMARC and continue to be followed, either through site visits or another appropriate agreement or mechanism.
- NAREEE supports the Secretary in requiring that the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must be properly constituted prior to any additional reviews or approvals of research protocols. Anything short of following *The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* (the Ag Guide, produced by the Federation of Animal Science Societies) is unacceptable. These standards are an appropriate and effective way to ensure animals are cared for and used appropriately in research protocols.

The public comments received both verbally and in writing were considered in the development of these recommendations.

On behalf of the entire NAREEE Advisory Board, I hope you find these recommendations both useful and informative. If we can be of additional assistance on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Milo F. Shult". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Milo" being the most prominent part.

Dr. Milo Shult
Chair, NAREEE Advisory Board

cc: Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator,
Agricultural Research Service