

NEWS RELEASE

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RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS HEAR FROM ALTERNATIVES ADVOCATES ON HOW TO COMPLY WITH NIH GUIDELINES

Eden Prairie, MN - The Alternatives Research and Development Foundation (ARDF) announced today the release of the *Proceedings of the Production of Monoclonal Antibodies Workshop*, held at a 1999 international conference, and the user-friendly *Guidance Document for IACUC Evaluation of Monoclonal Antibody Production Protocols*. These publications, combined with additional resources, will be sent by ARDF to every animal research facility in the United States as an *In Vitro MAb (Monoclonal Antibodies) Conversion Kit*.

This comprehensive kit responds to the critical need for direction on how IACUCs (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees, the local entity charged with evaluating animal use at every research institution) can comply with the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) recent directive to use "in vitro techniques as the default method for MAb production." NIH's pronouncement in December 1999 followed more than two years of legal wrangling and widespread debate in the scientific community, originating with the American Anti-Vivisection Society's (AAVS) filing of a legal petition to ban the painful animal ascites method in the U.S.

Despite the availability of more than a dozen in vitro replacement alternatives, the use of malignant ascites to produce MAbs has continued in the U.S., involving the painful death of more than a million animals a year, while being banned in five European countries. Expert European and U.S. scientists contributed to the workshop, held August 1999 in Bologna, Italy at the Third World Congress on Alternatives & Animal Use in the Life Sciences, that produced the *Proceedings ...* It was the most recent comprehensive effort to resolve the issue, and focused especially on practical guidance for IACUCs, investigators and staff.

AAVS Executive Director Tina Nelson commented that, "AAVS' affiliation with ARDF has produced exciting results. If IACUCs implement the evaluation protocols found in the kit, hundreds of thousands of animal lives will be saved".

ARDF Director John McArdle, Ph.D. noted that, "Preparation of the *Proceedings...*, the *Guidance Document...*, and in fact, the whole kit should finally put to rest the myth that animal advocacy and biomedical organizations cannot work together to promote better quality, more humane research activities".

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