



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
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August 22, 2008

Rear Admiral William S. Stokes  
Executive Director, Interagency Coordinating Committee  
on the Validation of Alternative Methods  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences  
P.O. Box 12233  
Mail Code EC-17  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear RADM Stokes:

I am replying to Dr. Wilson's letter dated February 28, 2008, requesting the Department of Defense's review of two *in vitro* test recommendations from the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM). The Department endorses using these neutral red uptake (NRU) assays, BALB/c 3T3 mouse fibroblasts (3T) and the normal human epidermal keratinocyte (NHK), for estimating starting doses for acute oral toxicity tests. The Department does not currently have research programs where preliminary research on both starting dose and LD<sub>50</sub> is unknown. In applications where starting or LD<sub>50</sub> doses are needed, then researchers will be encouraged to use these new alternatives as a method to minimize the use of animals as appropriate to support research goals.

The Department will use a variety of mechanisms to promote and encourage the use of these test methods. Informing Department scientists and veterinarians will be accomplished through activities such as newsletters and training sessions for both Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) members and laboratory personnel. Extramural scientists supporting Department research will be informed of these alternative test methods through their interactions with Department personnel and IACUCs. The Department of Defense takes very seriously our responsibility to develop and encourage methods that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research.

I appreciate your leadership role in the federal government's effort to identify and validate alternatives to using animals in research. The ICCVAM has been instrumental in facilitating federal-wide endorsement of alternatives to animal use.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Foster, Ph.D.  
Director, BioSystems

