



CHM Alliance Pty Ltd

**Animal Ethics
Committee**

Information

for

Members

***Training and induction information
relevant to your role***

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Introduction

Thank you for accepting the invitation to become a member of the CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Animal Ethics Committee.

This manual has been designed to provide information, training and induction for your participation in the committee.

The Animal Ethics Committee plays a crucial role in the compliance of CHM Alliance related companies with legislation and Codes of Practice relevant to the scientific use of animals. It also helps to ensure that all these activities are conducted to the highest possible standards while achieving satisfactory results in a competitive commercial environment.

The training conducted on farms under the auspice of the CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Registered Training Organisation and field trials conducted under expert supervision form the basis for activities approved and monitored by the AEC.

This information package will help new members to familiarise themselves with the major components of the AEC and the requirements of the legislation.

It has been developed based on the National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.

Helen Fletcher
AEC Chairperson

Animal Ethics Committee

Key Role

The Animal Ethics Committee's key role is to assess each proposal (application) to use animals for scientific purposes, including teaching, and decide whether:

- the use is justified
- the welfare of the animals is adequately protected

The AEC is the link between the scientist or teacher and the wider community.

For more information visit email: callweb@daf.qld.gov.au or www.daf.gov.au or telephone the DAF Customer Services Centre on 13 25 23.

The Structure of the Animal Ethics Committee

Membership must have:

- At least four members and include the following categories:

Category A: a person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the institution's activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge.

Category B: a suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the institution and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience. If the business of the AEC relates to the use of animals for teaching only, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed.

Category C: an **independent person** with an **active membership** of an animal welfare organisation or with a demonstrated commitment to animal welfare/ethics, who is not employed or otherwise associated with the institution and who is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, the person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and endorsement by, such an organisation.

Category D: a person not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their undergraduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

The Committee also appoints to the AEC a non voting person responsible for the routine care of trial animals. Additional personnel with skills and background of value to the AEC may be invited to provide specialist advice.

Meeting Quorum:

A Quorum of at least one category A, B, C and D member present to discuss applications. Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of those members present.

For animal use to be justified, the AEC must:

- be convinced that the benefits from the use outweigh the potential costs to the animal
- be assured that the '3 Rs' of animal use will be complied with (see pages 11& 12)
- ensure animal activities comply with the Code, which sets out the responsibilities of investigators, carers, teachers, institutions and AECs regarding the use of animals. Compliance with the Code is required under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (the Act)

Under the Act, animals cannot be used for scientific purposes unless the use has been approved by an AEC.

For more information check the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ea28

What is the difference between animal ethics and animal welfare?

Animal ethics

The ethics of using animals for scientific purposes and teaching is about justifying the use of animals and balancing any negative effects on the animals with the expected gains to science, the environment, and other animals or to humans.

Relevant Documents

Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (8th edition) 2013.

Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (QLD)

(The term "animal ethics" is often used as shorthand for using animals for scientific purposes and teaching.)

Animal welfare

Animal welfare refers to how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing.

Assessing the welfare state of an animal:

We can do this by measuring various factors such as:

- behaviour (normal or abnormal)
- reproduction (normal or decreased)
- stress hormone levels (normal or elevated)
- other physiological measures, such as heart and respiration rates (normal or increased)

An animal's "wellbeing"

Animal welfare is also based on an animal's "wellbeing" which implies a positive mental state, successful biological function, positive experiences and freedom from adverse conditions.

Making an ethical decision

Pain Vs Gain – the balance

When considering the use of animals for scientific purposes and teaching we use:

- the welfare indicators from the animal(s) to assess any negative impacts on the animal(s) (the "pain")
- weigh these with the expected benefits (to science, other animals, humans, the environment etc) from using the animal(s) (the "gain").

This is an ethical decision that we make i.e. we consider the Pain vs Gain. It is important that we consider the TOTAL "pain" (all negative impacts on all of the animals) and the aim is to keep this to an (absolute) minimum.

Introduction to the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes

Peruse the **Contents** (page iii) of the Code to get an idea of what headings are included in each section.

Peruse the **Introduction**.

Question 1

Complete the following true/false table. State why and give a source reference if relevant

Statement	True/ False	State why
1. Teaching activities using animals are not covered in the scope of the Code (Ref: Page 1 & Section 4)		
2. Ante natal animals are not sentient and cannot feel pain (Ref: Page 1)		
3. Ante natal animals that have progressed beyond half of the gestation period have the potential to feel pain or distress (Ref: Page 1 of the Code)		

Question 2

Which of the following activities would you class as 'death as an end point'?

Definition: Refer to Page 4

1. A group of pigs are euthanased after the completion of a vaccine efficacy test
2. An animal is euthanased while on a trial when it breaks its leg

Question 3

Use the definition of a scientific purpose and examples given on pages 9-10 of this document taken from the DAF animal welfare website – www.daf.gov.au/animalwelfare/ - to determine which five of the following list of activities are classified as scientific purposes. Circle the numbers that correspond to the correct answers.

1. An instructor teaching a group of pony clubbers horse care
2. A CHM company teaching employees artificial insemination of sows and gilts on farm
3. A group of local residents carrying out an observational bird watching activity
4. A CHM company training staff how to euthanase pigs on a farm
5. A university optometry class dissecting cattle eyes obtained from the local abattoir
6. A CHM company trainer teaching new staff how to slap brand pigs in a piggery
7. A private veterinary pharmaceutical company infecting dogs with paralysis ticks for the production of antiserum

Definition of 'scientific purposes'

Scientific purposes are activities performed to acquire, develop or demonstrate knowledge or techniques in any area of science including:

- teaching
- field trials
- environmental studies
- research
- diagnosis
- product testing
- production of biological products.

Scientific purposes also include using any animal or the remains of an animal that was killed for the purposes of any of the above. Anyone using animals for scientific purpose must be [registered with Biosecurity Queensland](#) and obtain approval from an animal ethics committee (AEC).

Activities not regarded as scientific purposes

- Fish tagging
- Bird banding
- Diagnosis by a veterinarian within routine veterinary practice or biosecurity inspectors undertaking a disease response.

Animal ethics committee approval is not required for the routine production of food or fibre, for routine husbandry procedures (e.g. clipping coats and nails and vaccinations) and for inspectorial staff undertaking routine regulatory activities. Approval is also not required for the training and application of agricultural extension work practices and students in veterinary science, veterinary nursing and veterinary technology, provided all conditions outlined in clause 4.17 of the Scientific Use Code apply.

Anyone who is unsure whether a certain animal use requires ethics approval should consult the Scientific Use Code, contact Biosecurity Queensland or the chairperson of their animal ethics committee (AEC) for advice.

Using animals for scientific purposes

The use of live animals for scientific purposes has provided many benefits for both animals and humans. However, this use has also been an area of public concern because of the potential for suffering or negative effects on the animals' welfare.

The decision to use animals for scientific purposes is guided by the governing principles and ethical framework outlined in the Scientific Use Code. The governing principles require people to:

- Respect animals by
 - Only using when justified
 - Supporting animal wellbeing
 - Avoiding or minimising harm, pain and distress to animals
 - Applying high standards of scientific integrity
 - Applying replacement, reduction and refinement (3Rs) to all stages of animal care and use
 - Knowing and accepting one's responsibilities
- Subject the care and use of animals for scientific purposes to ethical review
- Judge whether the proposed use of animals is ethically acceptable
- Balance whether the potential effects on animal wellbeing is justified by the potential benefits

Definition of 'animal'

Under the Queensland *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA), an animal is any live vertebrate and cephalopods. This includes:

- amphibians
- birds
- fish
- mammals (other than humans)
- reptiles
- cephalopods (octopus, squid, cuttlefish and nautilus).

Animals also include live pre-natal or pre-hatched creatures in the last half of gestation, including:

- mammalian or reptilian foetus
- pre-hatched avian, mammalian or reptilian young (eggs)
- live marsupial young.

Animals included under the ACPA:

- livestock
- companion animals
- laboratory animals
- wildlife
- pests
- feral animals
- zoo animals

Animals not included under the ACPA:

- invertebrates other than cephalopods
- humans including human foetus
- the eggs, spat, or spawn of fish
- immature amphibians and fish prior to final metamorphosis (e.g. fish fry and tadpoles)

Definition of 'use'

In this situation, 'use' generally means to cause or permit to be used. This includes to:

- acquire or purchase an animal
- accommodate, provide for, care for an animal
- breed with an animal
- identify the animal (e.g. microchip, ear tag, brand)
- dispose of an animal
- drive, load ride, transport or work an animal

In Queensland, an animal should be considered to be 'used' if the animal might reasonably be assumed to have perceived the use and be aware of a change from what might otherwise have occurred.

For example, whale watching from the coast line is not considered 'use' of the whale, as the whale is not reasonably assumed to be aware of the observer. However, whale watching from a boat is considered 'use' of the whale, as the whale might reasonably be assumed to be aware of the presence of the boat that would not otherwise have been there.

Section 1 Governing Principles

What are the 3 Rs of Animal Ethics?

The principles of **R**eplacement, **R**eduction and **R**efinement

These must be considered to improve the welfare of the animal when using animals for research, testing and teaching. The Animal Ethics Committee needs evidence that the 3 Rs have been applied.

As AEC members, you will assess the levels of commitment to and encourage the application of the 3Rs.

Replacement

Can the use of animals be replaced or complemented with alternatives?

For example:

- using a model to illustrate the anatomy of a pig or a hen

Reduction

Reduction in the number of animals used. Investigators or teachers must ensure that individual animals do not suffer more as a result of reducing numbers and that reduction does not result in unnecessary repetition of activities.

For example:

- using organs from dead animals to practise surgical artificial insemination before training on live animals
- reducing animal numbers without compromising the statistical validity and outcomes

Refinement

Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals. Are the animals chosen suitable for the study and are appropriate methods and techniques in place to minimise pain or distress to the animals? Staff must be suitably trained and competent, and investigators or teachers must ensure that scientific activities using animals are as brief as possible.

For example:

- use of analgesia or anaesthetic for a painful procedure that must be used on animals
- improving animal husbandry and the animal's environment
- setting withdrawal parameters and humane end-points

For more information visit www.daf.qld.gov.au or callweb@daf.gov.au telephone the DAF Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 6

Section 2 Responsibilities of institutions and their animal ethics committees

Refer to the CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Animal Ethics Committee Operations Manual

- Terms of Reference
- Membership
- Responsibilities of the Chairperson
- Operating procedures
- Proposals
- Assessing proposals
- Monitoring
- Reporting of projects
- Reporting to the institution
- Projects involving more than one AEC
- Non-institutional applicants and AEC responsibility
- Projects conducted in other countries in association with Australian Institutions
- Report of adverse or unexpected effects during the conduct of an approved project
- Non-compliance with the Code

Question 4

What record in the Manual ensures that the AEC is notified immediately of an adverse event or emergency and the action taken by the project investigators?

Question 5

Match who is responsible from the following list with the responsibility statements in the table.

- A. Members of the AEC
- B. Investigators, teachers and animal facility managers
- C. The DAF Authorised Officer and Community Audit Team members
- D. The animal facility manager or person in charge of the animals and the AEC
- E. The Investigator or trainer

Monitoring Action	Who is Responsible
1. Notify the AEC of any adverse impacts on trial animals	
2. Carry out site inspections of all animal houses and laboratory areas regularly and record their findings	
3. Monitor the day to day wellbeing of animals on approved projects	
4. Monitor the operations of the AEC and the institution for Scientific Use Code compliance	
5. Monitoring of animals in a breeding and holding facility before they are assigned to a project	

Section 2 also relates to vocational education and training. Information to support the case for ethical acceptability of the proposed use of animals must demonstrate the principles of the Code. How does the Code apply to the CHM training program conducted on farms?

Question 6

A trainer on a farm is teaching trainees to euthanase stock on the property. Is this classed as a scientific purpose? Is AEC approval required?

Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements

Section 2 of the Code outlines Reporting requirements. The DAF website section 'Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements' provides a summary of the various reporting responsibilities to assist registrants and their AECs.

The six key areas of information that must be in the written annual progress report from the investigator to the AEC are:

1. What progress has been achieved?
2. Any problems that may have interfered with the progress of the project?
3. How many animals have been used?
4. Whether the wellbeing of the animals is consistent with that anticipated in the proposal?
5. Whether any changes are envisaged?
6. Whether the project is meeting its aims?

Referring to the DAF website Record Keeping section – What is the AEC obligation to submit the Annual Animal Use Statistics Report to DAF?

Section 3 Animal Wellbeing

This section applies to animals used for scientific purposes and to all activities and situations involving their care and use. Refer further to Section 3 of the Code.

Areas outlined include:

- How to approach supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of animals
- Information on supporting the wellbeing of animals during their care and management
- Information on safeguarding the wellbeing of animals during the conduct of specific procedures
- Information on provisions for animals at the conclusion of their use

Information provided in the Code is based on the assumption that approval has been obtained from the animal ethics committee (AEC) before any activity, including projects, commences (see Clause 1.32).

Question 7

Read the relevant Code sections on pain and distress and complete the following true/false table. State why and give a source reference if relevant.

Signs of sustained pain and distress in animals include weight loss, low reproductive rates and reduced resistance to disease	True / False
Animals must exhibit both behavioural and physiological changes to show they are experiencing pain or distress	True / False
Animals are generally much tougher than humans and many surgical activities can be carried out without anaesthesia	True / False
Signs of pain and distress can be species specific, with some animals becoming more aggressive and others unduly submissive	True / False
Animals showing severe pain or distress even after the use of anaesthesia, analgesia or tranquillising agents can be maintained in that state for a short period until the aims of the approved project are achieved	True / False

Section 4 Care and use of animals for the achievement of education outcomes in science

Read the main headings covered in Section 4.

Investigators and teachers are personally responsible for all aspects of the care and use of the animals once they are assigned to the project and must:

- provide sufficient information to the AEC to justify the activity
- ensure that all staff are competent
- ensure the welfare of the animals is considered
- minimise pain and distress

One area of the general responsibilities that users often enquire about is routine husbandry procedures for livestock. The Code requires that AEC approval is obtained when these activities are researched or taught, that is, used for a scientific purpose.

The CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Animal Ethics Committee is concerned with educational activities such as:

- Animals used for scientific purposes to meet curriculum objectives, for example: routine husbandry of farm animals, environmental studies, on farm trials. Section 4 of the Code applies primarily to science education.

It is important to note that although Section 4 provides guidelines specifically for teaching, it should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Code in relation to scientific animal use.

Question 8

Refer Section 4 of the Code: A large pastoral company takes on rural secondary school trainees for formal work experience and trains them in routine husbandry procedures on the property as part of routine management operations. Is CHM Alliance AEC approval required?

Section 5 Complaints and Non-compliance

Complaints may be received about the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Complaints may be raised by any person or group, including investigators, animal carers, animal ethics committees (AECs), AEC members, students, employees of the institution and members of the public. Complaints may relate to the activities of any party or person involved in the care and use of animals, including investigators, animal carers, the AEC and governance officials.

Question 9

What can you find in the CHM Alliance Pty Ltd Operations Manual that facilitates compliance with this section of the Code?

Section 6 Independent external review of the operation of institutions

Independent external review assists institutions to assess whether the procedures established meet the goals set out in the Code and provides assurance that the institution, through its animal ethics committee (AEC), is delivering effective oversight of the care and use of the animals in its charge. The process should be educational and provide an opportunity for self-assessment so that members of the AEC and those at the institution who have responsibilities for animal care and use are involved in achieving the desired outcomes.

CHM Alliance Pty Ltd contracts a qualified independent external auditor to conduct reviews. Internal audits are also conducted. Any opportunities for improvement or corrective actions are addressed.

Terms of Reference for an AEC

Key information

The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (8th edition) 2013 states that all AECs must have terms of reference.

The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* requires that these are registered with DAF.

The terms of reference included in the Code should be used as a guide.

The terms of reference provide guidelines for the operation and responsibilities of the AEC.

Before appointment, new members must acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the terms of reference.

An AEC's terms of reference must include provisions to:

Monitor the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals.

Adopt Scientific Use Code Standards

Recommend to the Institution measures to ensure that the standards of the Scientific Use Code are maintained.

Assess Proposals

Examine and approve, subject to modification, or reject written proposals relevant to the use of animals in scientific and teaching activities.

Approve only those studies for which animals are essential and which conform to the requirements of the Code, taking into consideration ethical and welfare aspects as well as scientific or educational value.

Authorise Treatment of Animals

Formally withdraw approval for any project or authorise the treatment or humane killing of any animal.

Have procedures to deal with animal emergencies including the immediate use of animals for the diagnosis of unexplained and severe disease outbreaks and the availability of appropriate veterinary services and diagnostic services. An Executive may carry out this function but all decisions of the Executive must be reviewed by the full AEC at its next meeting.

Review Plans and Policies

Examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies which may affect animal welfare. An AEC will be involved with plans and policies in the animal ethics area and be advised of any changes to facilities or procedures, which may impact on animal welfare.

Maintain Register

An AEC must compile and maintain a register of approved projects and their locations and provide annual reports on animal use to the Institution.

Perform Code Duties

The AEC has established operating procedures as outlined in the Code and maintains records of meetings, deliberations, site inspections, annual and completion reports and complaints by investigators or teachers, members of the public or AEC members. These records and the register of approved projects are made available for audit purposes.

For more information visit www.daf.qld.gov.au/animalwelfare or telephone the DAF Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23

Legal information for AEC Members

What gives the AEC powers to assess applications and impose conditions on those conducting activities?

The Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (the Act) requires that all use of animals for scientific purposes be carried out by a person registered with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). An Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) that is approved by DAF must also assess all activities.

The AEC must be constituted and operated according to the guidelines in the Code. The Code is named as a compulsory code under the Act, which means it is unlawful for investigators and teachers not to comply with the Code and any conditions imposed by the AEC.

As an AEC member am I indemnified against personal injury and public liability?

YES. Most institutions have an indemnity policy that covers this. This includes any legal action relating to decisions made by the Committee. You should also be covered against any injury you may receive while carrying out committee business or site inspections. You will need to confirm the details of the indemnity policy with your institution or the Chairperson of your AEC.

Will I be assessing commercial-in-confidence information?

YES. Members must use the confidential information only for the purpose of carrying out their responsibilities and delegations as a member of the AEC. You must not disclose any confidential information to any third parties. Members must sign a confidentiality agreement on joining the committee.

Will my privacy be protected as an AEC member?

YES. The names and personal details of AEC members are confidential and are not disclosed to any third parties. Freedom of Information laws allow a person to make an enquiry about an AEC, however unless it is deemed to be in the public interest or is related to a criminal offence, no details would be disclosed.

Is there a process for complaints and grievances?

YES. All Institutions and AECs must have a process in place to investigate grievances or disagreements involving the AEC and animal users, the AEC and Management of the institution, or amongst AEC members. There must also be a complaints procedure to investigate complaints or concerns by members of the AEC, institutional staff or members of the public. Unresolved complaints and grievances can be referred to the DAF Director General for adjudication.

Who is legally responsible for compliance with the Act and the Code?

Both CHM Alliance Pty Ltd and investigators have a legal responsibility to comply with the Act and the Code as they relate to their animal use activities. However the Code makes it clear that investigators and teachers have ultimate responsibility for the welfare of their animals while on approved activities. CHM Alliance has internal

disciplinary procedures to manage non-compliance and both the company and individual investigators can incur penalties for breaches of the legislation.

For more information visit www.daf.qld.gov.au/animalwelfare or telephone the DAF Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Information Sources

Sources

For information regarding ethics matters in your relevant institution, contact:

Biosecurity Queensland – Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) Customer Service Centre:

Contact the DAF Customer Services Centre on 13 25 23 to access the reference materials in the library or the Animal Welfare Unit.

(The DAF library and Animal Welfare Unit has an extensive collection of reference books, videos and brochures relating to animal ethics and welfare and these are available for loan to AEC members.)

The Internet:

Start with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries site:

www.daf.qld.gov.au/animalwelfare for information/links

Legislation and Codes of Practice eg the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*; the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (8th edition) 2013 and SCARM Codes of Practice,

Other government departments and agencies eg Australian Government: Department of Agriculture and Water Resources; the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Animal Welfare Organisations eg RSPCA; Animals Australia

Alternatives to the use of animals in research eg Australian Association for Humane Research, ANZCCART; Humane Research Australia

Animal Ethics in Universities and Colleges eg Monash University, Queensland University and the University of Southern Queensland

Environmental enrichment eg Environmental Enrichment for Captive Animals