

The challenge of arranging accredited courses for fish researchers and technicians

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The regulation on animal experimentation requires training for all personnel involved in animal experiments, including fish (1). The education has to be approved by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet). Also in the draft for the new directive for use of animals in research (2) it is stated that persons who carry out experiments or take part in them and persons who take care of animals used for experiments, including duties of a supervisory nature, shall have appropriate education and training.

The aim of the Bologna process (3) is to make academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe. The purpose is to facilitate mobility of students and researchers within the European community.

The Federation of European Laboratory animal Science Associations (FELASA) has made recommendations and guidelines for educational demands to four different categories of personnel working with laboratory animals (4). Especially the category C, for Persons responsible for directing animal experiments, has been adopted globally. FELASA also accreditate course programs.

Laboratory Animal Science (LAS) is a multidisciplinary branch of Science contributing to humane use of animals in research and to collections of informative, unbiased and reproducible data (van Zutphen 2001) (5). Laboratory Animal Science has traditionally been based on mammals and traditional laboratory animals like mice and rats. However the objectives for laboratory animal science also apply for fish, i.e. humane use, informative, unbiased and reproducible data.

The first courses in Lab Animal science were mainly based on problems and solutions for mice and rats. Course evaluation from “fish researchers” clearly expressed that they wanted more examples from fish-related research. The University of Bergen has based their courses on the fundament of FELASA guidelines and the objectives of laboratory animal science. To motivate the students by use of more practical examples we have divided part of the course into a special module for mammals and a special part for fish. Topics for this special part are anaesthesia, health and welfare in fish, nutrition, biological properties for some commonly used species, environmental conditions, handling, blood-sampling and marking of fish.

1. Forskrift om forsøk med dyr
2. Proposed revision of EC Directive 86/609 EEC
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna_prosess
4. <http://www.felasa.eu/guidelines.php>
5. Principles of Laboratory Animal Science. L.F.M. van Zutphen, 2001