Statens tilsyn for planter, fisk, dyr og næringsmidler

Mattilsynet

Challenges for the Authority

Heidi Bugge
Senior adviser/Veterinarian
National Assignments Department
Norwegian Food Safety Authority

New legislation in Norway

- **July 1st, 2015: a new regulation based on EU directive**
- **Norwegian Food Safety Authority: do the approvals and inspections**
- **Who are we?: National Assignments Department (Avdeling for nasjonale oppgaver)**

  - 6 advisers
  - 0.5 employee with support function
  - External experts available when needed

  - **How:** Applications are received through FOTS
  - Application for experiments: consideration within 40 working days

First: the benefits with the new administration

- No more monthly deadlines for the applications
- Decision regarding the authorisation is maximum 40 days, often shorter
- Possibility of making exceptions on special occasions
- Easy to get in touch with us directly, we can have good dialogues and get input

What is new?

Main differences for applicants for field experiments:

- Approval of the field user establishments
- The researcher must be affiliated to an approved establishment, going solo is no longer an option
- FOTS: application is sent via personell responsible for overseeing the welfare and care of the animals (PMSK). This should contain a local evaluation and a quality check
- Severity classification of the experiment
- Project summary, published on our website automatically
- Applicant will be charged a fee
- A veterinarian must be in place during medical immobilization

Challenges/benefits

Highlight the use of animal welfare unit and personell responsible for overseeing the welfare and care of the animals (PMSK)

Together you can make a difference:

- Better applications can shorten the evaluation period, and even maybe lower the cost
- Planning and doing the experiment in a better way makes better science

Which experiments should you apply for?

Directive says; «.. which may cause the animal a level of pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm equivalent to, or higher than caused by introduction of a needle in accordance with good veterinary practice..»

Easy…..?

Statements from the Commission:

“The exact reasons for blood sampling should be identified and the purpose should determine whether it falls within the scope of the Directive.”

“If blood samples are taken for the purposes of answering research question/(s) using live animals then this seems to fall under the scope - even if the capture of the animal happened to be a "by-product" of population management.”

Challenges

How do we define **pain, stress and lasting harm** for the wild living animals?

Capture itself will be stressful, but how stressful?

All instrumental devices like tags and collars cause a load to the animal, but what load?

What about the late effects that we may never see?

The wild living animals will not be followed up and supported in the same way as a lab rat

Conclusion: procedures without any needles involved will often need approval

The purpose

How do we interprete *scientific*?

We all agree that *research* is scientific…

What about *management*?

Animals can only be used in experiments for certain purposes:

- **Protection of the natural environment in the interest of the health or welfare of human beings or animals**
- **Research aimed at preservation of the species**

Marking of animals for management purposes clearly belongs here

Challenges – evaluation

Harm/ benefit assessment, the essence in the evaluation process: The suffering of animals versus the knowledge that we gain

The benefits when using animals in field experiments may be presented like this:

- “We need to know more”
- “ We need to study the impact of climate changes”
- “The study is a part of a long time study that will give essential information”

but when do we know enough?

Challenges - evaluation

Electronic devices can give some information, but it is hard to say how the animals are affected by capture and immobilization

Do they eat or drink less? Move more slowly? Is their social behaviour different? How does this interfere with habitat use?

After release the animal will be «out of sight» to both the researcher and the Authority

Challenges 3 R

The wild life researchers must focus on the 3Rs

- *Replace*; Why do we do this? What knowledge can you achieve by following the animals' tracks on the ground or using cameras, sample droppings, hair etc.
- *Reduce*; too many animals is seldom a problem, due to logistics and the cost of expensive devices
- *Refine*; Let others learn by your mistakes! Deviation reports should be sent to the Authority and also be published

  Use the best devices, not the cheapest or most available

  Improve continously your medical protocols and your humane endpoints

Challenges

Short «outside» season, pressure on getting the approvals in time, or the whole season may be lost

Sudden and unexpected changes in nature require the need of quickly approved changes of experiment:

- «the waterflow rises»
- «early snow melting this year»
- «more animals available than we first expected»
- «could afford more collars than planned»

Challenges

Political decisions and signals

In the season of 2017 the Norwegian Government initiated collar marking and biological sampling of wolves without approval from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority

But no written instructions were given…

So despite these signals…

Collar marking of wild animals is still an experiment which needs to be applied for

Summary

- Wildlife research needs an approval
- Focus on 3 Rs
- Use your animal welfare unit and PMSK
- Share your successes - *and* failures