



Position Statement

Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats in Research

Although the research community depends on the use of purpose-bred animals for most scientific research activities, the members of ASLAP also understand and appreciate the unique contributions and significant medical advances to human and animal health that have been made possible through the judicious use of random source animals in research, testing, and education.

Random source dogs and cats have diverse genetic backgrounds, represent a wide spectrum of ages, and have variable body sizes, anatomic conformations, and other pre-existing conditions.

These characteristics make them useful subjects for teaching and developing surgical techniques, as well as the study of naturally occurring diseases and progressive, irreversible disorders often associated with advanced age, such as:

- Cardiovascular disease;
- Insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes;
- Epilepsy, senility, and cognitive disorders;
- Immunologic and inflammatory diseases of the digestive system;
- Musculoskeletal disorders, arthritis, and age-associated loss of bone and muscle mass;
- Periodontitis and dental disease;
- Impaired renal function and urinary incontinence; and
- Neoplasia

With the knowledge that animal research is essential to medical progress, we endorse the conscientious use of random source dogs and cats in studies for which there is a demonstrated need and no other suitable models are available. Under appropriately controlled circumstances, animals that are destined for euthanasia can play a crucial role in studies that improve both human and animal health.

As a result, ASLAP supports continued access to these animals through all available legal means - including pounds, shelters, private donations, pre-clinical consortia, commercial vendors, and the use of Class B dealers - since all these sources are currently needed to ensure a consistent and acceptable supply of the types and varieties of animals necessary to maintain scientific advancement. However, the members of ASLAP also understand the critical need to develop reliable alternatives for random source dogs and cats in research, testing, and education and which will ultimately eliminate the need for Class B dealers as a source for these particular animal models. At this time, we cannot advocate complete reliance on non-Class B options as the sole suppliers of random source dogs and cats because these sources cannot guarantee an adequate supply and variety of random source dogs and cats to completely support ongoing and

future research efforts, and many state and local regulations do not permit the acquisition of animals directly from pounds or shelters for use in research. In addition, most random source dogs and cats acquired through these latter sources are not subject to Federal oversight, and there is no guarantee the originating facility will have the infrastructure or resources to fully comply with the minimum standards established by the Animal Welfare Act Regulations. Many animals in shelters and pounds are former pets and, under current circumstances, these facilities may not have the ability to selectively exclude former pets from use in research. In the interim, ASLAP strongly advocates actions that will ensure sound oversight of Class B dealers, including intensified inspection efforts and the absolute enforcement of existing Federal regulations by the USDA, to preserve this option until a more acceptable alternative source of animals becomes available. Furthermore, we acknowledge our individual and collective responsibilities as a profession to promote rigorous local institutional oversight mechanisms that will ensure random source dogs and cats are provided the same protections as other animals used in research and acquired only through legal and reputable suppliers. At minimum, sources used to obtain these animals should be regularly inspected to ensure an adequate physical plant, an appropriate veterinary care program, and strict compliance with animal welfare regulations.

Proposed October 19, 2009 by the ASLAP Animal Welfare Committee
Approved November 8, 2009 by the ASLAP Board