SUMMARY OF ANIMAL WELFARE INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE CCAC

DATE OF PUBLICATION: March 2022

The CCAC policy: Certification of ethical animal care and use programs has been recently updated to include the mandatory disclosure of reportable animal welfare incidents to the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) within 14 days of occurrence. The threshold for reporting animal incidents is outlined in the CCAC frequently asked questions: CCAC reportable animal welfare incidents document.

As part of our service to institutions, a summary of the incidents is provided below to help inform the community of risks to animal welfare. The CCAC encourages all institutions to review their current policies, processes, and infrastructure to help safeguard animal welfare. Please contact the CCAC should you be uncertain of whether an animal welfare incident should be reported.

From July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, the CCAC formally reviewed 42 animal welfare incidents.

Animal Welfare Incidents by Animal Type
(July 1 - December 31, 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Animal</th>
<th>Number of Incidents Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FISH</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RODENTS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONHUMAN PRIMATES</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVESTOCK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Multifactorial reasons included a combination of procedural and equipment deficiencies all related to aquatic systems.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

NON-COMPLIANCE

- Several mortality incidents were associated with unapproved procedures (protocol non-compliance) or animal-based work that occurred without a protocol. The central tenant of an ethical animal care and use program is that no animal work can occur without an approved protocol and non-adherence to this can result in an institution losing its certification.

AQUATICS

Fishes continue to represent the largest number of animal welfare incidents. Common issues are outlined below:

- Procedural errors and lack of monitoring (both remote and in-person) continue to result in animal mortality. Institutions are expected to perform risk-assessments of all aquatic facilities, including a review of standard husbandry practices (e.g., feeding, cleaning, water quality monitoring, general maintenance, etc.) to ensure consistency in the application of these tasks among personnel. Other measures to reduce human error include controlling access...
(e.g., locking out or removing access to hot water valves to prevent accidental use, modifying practices to prevent personnel from circumventing steps of a procedure, updating standard operating procedures, appropriate training, etc.), secondary checks, updating standard operating procedures, or appropriate training.

- Shortcomings in the set-up and use of static tanks has also been identified as a cause of mortality. Standard operating procedures for proper set-up (e.g., establishment of the biofilter, etc.) and acceptable water quality monitoring/parameters prior to and during use are required.

- Even with the use of carbon filters there continues to be reports of dechlorination failures. Institutions should consider setting up filters “in series” and performing verifications at various points along the system. This is in addition to regular maintenance of these systems.

**DOSING ERRORS**

- Several reported incidents were related to dosing errors which resulted in mortality (e.g., miscalculation, incorrect dose administered, unknown impact of compound, etc.). Measures to reduce reoccurrence included: dosing of only one animal followed by intense monitoring prior to dosing any other animals; preparation of compounds following a clear, documented checklist; requesting support from veterinary services; and retraining personnel.

**HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF INCOMING ANIMALS**

- Mortality due to health issues in incoming animals has been reported. Institutions must have a process in place for supplier approval and health assessment of incoming animals. Please refer to the [CCAC guidelines on: procurement of animals used in science](http://example.com) (CCAC, 2007). Institutions should review their procurement processes to ensure that they are comprehensive and are applied in practice.