

# AAALAC International Facts



## What is AAALAC International?

AAALAC International (the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International) is a nongovernmental organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science through voluntary accreditation and evaluation programs. More than 670 companies, universities, hospitals, government agencies and other research institutions have earned AAALAC accreditation, demonstrating their commitment to responsible animal care and use.

## Why is AAALAC's role important to humans and animals?

Many of us take for granted the level of medical care and treatment available today. The immunizations our children receive, cures for diseases such as polio, and treatments for all types of cancer, diabetes and heart disease, allow more people than ever before to live longer and enjoy a better quality of life. The health of our pets and farm animals has also improved dramatically, as researchers have discovered vaccines

for rabies, distemper, parvo virus, feline leukemia and dozens of other afflictions. Wildlife and endangered species have also been saved through research in reproduction, nutrition and toxicology. These accomplishments—improving both human and animal health—were all made possible through animal research.

For some, animal research is a controversial topic. But like others in the animal welfare arena, AAALAC endorses the use of animals to advance medicine and science when there are no non-animal alternatives, and when it is done in an ethical and humane way. When animals are used, AAALAC works with institutions and researchers to serve as a bridge between progress and animal well-being. This is done through a voluntary accreditation process in which research programs demonstrate that they are not only meeting the minimums required by law, but are going the extra step to achieve excellence in animal care and use. In this way, AAALAC International is where science and responsible animal care connect.

## How does the AAALAC accreditation program work?

AAALAC International's accreditation program evaluates organizations and companies using animals in research, teaching or testing, and awards accreditation to those that achieve

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certain standards. The process involves an extensive internal review conducted by the institution applying for accreditation, and an external review by AAALAC evaluators. After an institution earns accreditation, it must be re-evaluated every three years in order to maintain its accredited status. AAALAC International accreditation benefits the institution and the animals under its care in many ways. Each time a new institution or company becomes accredited, it helps to raise the *global* benchmark for animal well-being in science.

## How is AAALAC governed?

AAALAC International is governed by a Board of Trustees representing more than 60 prestigious scientific, educational and professional organizations. These "Member Organizations" include the American Medical Association, Society for Pediatric Research, American Veterinary Medical Association, Society for Neuroscience and many others. By actively involving these major groups, AAALAC International can remain responsive to the issues these groups face, while making sure that the scientific and education communities understand and support the AAALAC International accreditation program.

AAALAC's accreditation program is carried out by the Council on Accreditation. The Council is comprised of 32 highly accomplished laboratory animal medicine specialists, research scientists and other professionals from around the globe. They conduct the evaluations that determine which institutions are awarded AAALAC accreditation. The Council relies on AAALAC's pool of more than 180 ad



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ad hoc Consultants/Specialists who assist Council members in conducting site visits and evaluating animal care and use programs.

## The impact of AAALAC on animal well-being in science

While many factors have contributed to the improvement of animal well-being in science over the past several decades, AAALAC's role in this area is impressive. Today more than 650 institutions have earned AAALAC accreditation, demonstrating their commitment to responsible animal care and use.

A recent AAALAC report also shows that the majority of accredited institutions are doing a far better job of maintaining *consistent* levels of excellence than they did a decade ago. All accredited institutions must be revisited every three years in order to maintain accreditation. In 1986, only 37 percent of all AAALAC-accredited animal programs revisited were immediately awarded Continued Full Accreditation. (The rest were required to make changes before their accreditation could be renewed.) In contrast, today more than 70 percent of institutions revisited are immediately awarded Continued Full Accreditation. This rise demonstrates that over the years, institutions involved in the AAALAC accreditation program have stepped up their ongoing efforts to raise standards for animal well-being in research, and are keeping them at a consistently high level.

## AAALAC International facts and figures ...

- Total number of institutions accredited by AAALAC International: **>670**
- Total number of countries where AAALAC-accredited institutions can be found: **24** (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Korea, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, The Netherlands, and the United States)
- Breakdown of the total number of accredited institutions by category: Commercial organizations **32%**, Universities **31%**, Government agencies **21%**, Hospitals **9%**, Nonprofit / NGO **7%**
- Number of Member Organizations represented on the Board of Trustees: **>68**
- Number of members on the North American Section of the Council of Accreditation: **32**
- Number of members on the European Section of the Council of Accreditation: **10**
- Number of ad hoc Consultants working with the Council: **>180**
- Year AAALAC was founded: **1965**