

# How to Compose a Laboratory Animal Use Report for the USDA

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An annual report on laboratory animal use must be submitted by all research facilities to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal Care Staff, as part of the legal requirements of the Federal Laboratory Animal Welfare Act (P.L. 89-544) and its subsequent amendments. This report (USDA:VC Form 18-23, Annual Report of Research Facility) must include an explanation of the scientific bases for conducting any research and/or tests that involve un eased distress (the "Pain-No Drugs" situation) in animal subjects.

What particular elements would demonstrate that an investigator was truly concerned about the use and welfare of his or her animal subjects in studies that are necessary but whose design precludes relief of pain? And, how can an investigator communicate his justification of such studies in a written statement, such that others will appreciate his or her concern for the well-being of the animals? I believe that such a statement, signed by the responsible investigator, should include the following:

1. A brief descriptive title of what

is being studied or tested and a short description, expressed in terms understandable by an educated layman, of the precise circumstances of the un eased distress.

2. An affirmation that the study has been reviewed and approved by an appropriately constituted body of peers, who have determined that the study is both scientifically valid and worthwhile and that the unrelieved pain is a necessary aspect of the experiment, because its relief would critically interfere with or invalidate the results of the study.

3. An affirmation that, throughout the experimental procedures, the utmost care and consideration are being taken to provide for the welfare and well-being of the animal subjects.

4. An affirmation that the painful circumstances, although unrelieved during the experimental procedure, are discontinued immediately after the essential objectives of the study or test have been attained.

5. A statement that valid alternative model systems and/or techniques are always considered, in an attempt to diminish or eliminate the un eased pain in the study or test.