Current Issues and New Frontiers in Animal Research
Edited by K A L Bayne, M Greene and E D Prentice (1995). Scientists Center for Animal Welfare (SCAW): Greenbelt. 104pp. Paperback. Obtainable from SCAW, 7833 Walker Drive, Suite 340, Greenbelt, MD 20770, USA; and from UFAW. Price £22.

This paperback publication contains the proceedings of a conference held in San Antonio, Texas on December 8–9, 1994 sponsored by the Scientists Center for Animal Welfare and the University of Texas Health Center at San Antonio. The style throughout is that of oral communications, and a careful scrutiny of the list of participants shows that four contributions were not included in the publication.

The Contents are broken into four groups: Updates on Regulations; Current IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) Issues; Biocontainment, Biosafety & Biohazards; and New Frontiers.

Being an American publication the 'regulations' are relevant to the United States. However, in the second paper in this section J Derrel Clark reviews the relationship between research on animal behaviour and the construction of guidelines for laboratory animal care. He points out that although guidelines are often based on sound experience their very existence tends to discourage real research on psychological well-being, environment and the effect of numerous physical factors on mental states of laboratory animals. Dr Clark urges scientific research into the factors that promote animal comfort and warns that laws and guidelines will be written, with or without scientific input.

IACUCs are very much in vogue at the present time and all six papers in this section are worth reading. In a paper entitled 'Death as an endpoint' Dr Browder sets out sensible considerations by which scientists, animal care staff and IACUC members might refine methods so as to achieve the scientific objective of the experiment without requiring death as the endpoint.

Another paper in this section asks the question 'Why should anyone want to be an unaffiliated member of an IACUC?' It appears that in America the Animal Welfare Act 1985 requires an unaffiliated member on IACUCs, who 'will provide representation for general community interests in the proper care and treatment of animals . . .'. The author sees such a person as 'standing between the animal protectionist groups on the one hand and researchers on the other'. The paper provides an interesting insight into the role of the lay representative on an ethics committee and one feels that Dr Robb would indeed be an asset to any IACUC. Dr Robb turns out to be an emeritus professor of biomedical ethics; a rare species for such appointments.

Two papers in the section on Biocontainment, Biosafety & Biohazards are worthy of note. Dr Ford considers research areas requiring biocontainment and, although the background is American, an up-to-date overview is offered which would be of value to the general reader. The other paper which seems almost out of place in this section considers 'New directions in the study of animal behaviour'. This is a paper for ethologists and takes forward the holistic argument made by Dr Clark in an earlier section. The thesis advanced by Drs Burghardt and Cunningham is that if the mental, psychological and cognitive needs of animals are met then the physical needs will be covered. This is seen as a radical shift in perspective and a source of challenge to IACUCs.

The final section of the publication deals with New Frontiers and here there are three papers on xenotransplantation under the general heading 'Justifiable clinical research or medical adventurism?' The first looks at the selection of animals for xenotransplantation and concludes that specific pathogen-free animals (pigs or non-human primates) will be required. A surgeon gives his view on xenotransplantation in the second paper and here the emphasis is placed on finding a successful solution to the patients' problems. He argues that if xenotransplantation offers improvements in quality of life, morbidity, mortality, waiting times for transplantation, need for retransplantation, and cost, then it should be adopted. The final paper in this group of three tackles the ethics of xenotransplantation and offers guarded support for continued experimental work. One feels that the sentiment of the paper has already been overtaken by progress in producing transgenic pigs as the donors of choice – but the ethical concerns remain.

The current issues and new frontiers in animal research identified in this publication are relevant. The papers represent the typescripts or summaries of talks given at a conference and inevitably there is a great unevenness in quality and style. This type of material, however, often has value if it quickly appears in print. Unfortunately this conference was held in December 1994 and was followed some nine months later by the publication. There is, however, at least one paper in each section that is well worth reading, and the publication is recommended on that basis.

J C Anderson
The Home Office
London, UK

Nonhuman Primates in Biomedical Research: Biology and Management

Edited by B Taylor Bennett, Christian R Abee and Roy Henrickson (1995). American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine Series. Academic Press: San Diego; London. 428pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, 24–28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DX, UK; or 525 B Street, Suite 1900, San Diego, California 92101-4495, USA (ISBN 0 12 088661 8). Price £92.

This is the sort of book that reviewers dread as it is almost impossible for one person to assess it fairly. As this review is for a readership interested in animal welfare, I shall concentrate on this topic. The stated aim of the book is to provide a central source of information for those involved in the day-to-day care of primates used in research. To achieve such a goal is an extremely ambitious task, and one that is probably doomed to failure because of the limitations of space, and the fact that new information will date the volume. Publications of this scale and breadth take some time to put together and so the dating process has already begun. In most cases contributors do not quote references later than the late 1980s. Nonetheless, there is an enormous amount of information in this book covering all areas of laboratory primatology. There are chapters on: history, law, taxonomy, functional morphology, social behaviour, environmental enrichment, conservation, genetics, reproduction, housing, nutrition, identification, medical management, breeding and biosafety.

In some cases, I question the value of chapters that can only skate over the surface of a subject. For example, the description of primate social structures is a very broad sweep and one would hope that laboratory primate scientists would want to know more than is given here about their study species. Likewise, the description of observation methods is very