ECLAM statement on support of transportation of research animals

ECLAM recognizes and supports the need for safe, rapid, and reliable professional transportation of research animals.

The role of animals in biomedical research is critical to and necessary for medical and scientific advancements. Animal models are central to understanding complex biological functions where multiple organ systems interact and to understanding disease processes. Every Nobel Prize for medicine awarded in the last 30 years has had a basis in animal research.

Scientists, like members of the general public, strongly support animal welfare. Furthermore, scientists recognize that high quality, accurate research requires healthy animal models in order to produce the necessary data. The 3Rs philosophy, first proposed in 1959, is ingrained in the research process and embedded in Directive 2010/63/EU on “the protection of animals used for scientific purposes”. Scientists are required to consider carefully the numbers of animals required and use the minimum necessary to answer a scientific question (Reduction), use animals only when necessary (Replacement), and use modern methodology and treatments to prevent and relieve pain or distress (Refinement). The research community takes this ethical obligation very seriously.

Research animal transportation is a vital component of modern biomedical research for the following reasons:

- Transportation allows institutions to share disease models such as genetically modified strains and spontaneous disease models, thereby enhancing scientific collaboration across institutions and countries.
- Genetic consistency is important in producing reliable results, and sharing a common model accelerates the research process. Again, this is achieved through transportation of animals from a common genetic source.
- Breeding animals in centralized locations and transporting them to research sites rather than producing animals at each individual institution reduces overproduction, particularly in rodent colonies and supports the goal of “Reduction”.

ECLAM therefore recognizes and supports the need for safe, rapid, and reliable professional transportation of research animals and support the organizations working to provide this critical service. Transportation providers are a vital link in finding cures and treatments for human and animal disease.